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A RAND NOTE

Within and Beyond Naval Confidence-Building:  
The Legacy and the Options

James L. Lacy

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# A RAND NOTE

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## Within and Beyond Naval Confidence-Building: The Legacy and the Options

James L. Lacy

Prepared for the  
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

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## **PREFACE**

As part of a study entitled "Framework Concepts and Analysis for Conventional Arms Control" for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, RAND has been examining questions and options relating to the possible future inclusion of general-purpose naval forces in East-West negotiations. The study has been conducted within the RAND Strategy Assessment Center, which is part of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center supported by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

This Note focuses on naval "confidence-building" in the East-West context. It examines present approaches and future options within and beyond confidence-building measures in the naval sphere. The aim is to be clearer about the kinds of choices the Soviet Union and the United States will face in the coming years.

- Eliminate or strictly limit the number of deployed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs).
- Set strict distances from other-party coastlines in which some or all naval forces may not operate.
- Eliminate or sharply reduce all foreign naval bases and support facilities.

In some cases, the proposals have been region-specific, covering all or parts of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, the Baltic Sea, and the Greenland, Norwegian, and North Seas. In other cases, the measures proposed are essentially global in reach and implication.

In March 1989 in Vienna, a subset of these proposals was tabled at the 35-nation Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE) to cover naval operations in waters around Europe. The Vienna package calls for:

- Notification and observation of naval exercises above a certain size and composition.
- Overall limitations on the size, frequency, and duration of naval exercises.
- Prohibitions of naval exercises entirely in "zones of intense shipping and fishing" and "straits of international significance."
- A comprehensive multilateral agreement on "prevention of incidents in sea areas and airspace adjoining Europe."

The U.S. response to these Soviet overtures has been generally and consistently negative thus far. Though it perhaps oversimplifies, we may think of U.S. objections as taking two broad forms. First, in the words of the director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency:

Requirements for naval armaments and activities of various nations are inherently asymmetrical and are based on broader geographic, political, strategic, and other military factors. Located between and separated from allies by two oceans, the United States relies on maritime activities and freedom of navigation under international law to protect its security and trade interests. Therefore, the United States cannot agree to any arms limitations or additional constraints on its naval activities.

Second, in the U.S. view, the particular formulations put forward by the Soviet Union are, variously, unnecessary, undesirable, impractical, and fatally one-sided in

## SUMMARY

### THE LEGACY

Since 1986, the Soviet Union has made a number of arms control proposals aimed at limiting general purpose naval forces and their activities. Most of these proposals entail measures that might be broadly viewed as "confidence-building." This includes essentially everything that might be superimposed on general purpose naval forces through negotiation other than straightforward elimination or reduction of units, weapons, platforms, and systems. The single common thread is that the arrangements sought do not immediately or directly affect the size, structure, composition, or ultimate military capability of naval forces. Naval confidence-building speaks instead to the what, why, when, and where of naval operations.

Soviet proposals of these types are numerous and quite varied. Some have been offered directly in the context of negotiations on conventional forces in Europe; others speak to different subject matter, different regions, and different negotiating possibilities. A few of these proposals embody relatively simple matters with which, in other contexts (and in the naval context in the past) the United States has not seriously quarreled: such things as general information exchanges, crisis hot-lines, and provisions for the prevention and resolution of incidents at sea. Others have a much more broad, far-reaching, and contentious sweep. The Soviet Union has proposed, variously, to

- Freeze or mutually withdraw Soviet and American naval forces from a number of sea areas.
- Limit or ban all Soviet/U.S. naval operations in major shipping lanes.
- Restrict or require advance notification and observation of naval exercises and maneuvers.
- Require announcement of the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on ships making port calls.
- Ban nuclear weapons entirely in areas to be established as nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ).
- Prohibit antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces from sea-area sanctuaries to be designated ASW-free zones.

implication. Although putatively balanced, they would constrain and complicate U.S. naval operations wholly out of proportion to what they would do to relevant Soviet capabilities.

U.S. policy is not etched in concrete, however, nor has the United States ruled out all possibilities in all circumstances for all time. Not everything the Soviet Union has proposed is objectionable to the United States to the same degree, or for the same reasons. Although the fact is seldom showcased in the public record, the United States has not always opposed confidence-building-type measures in the naval sphere, has endorsed or otherwise accepted a number of international limitations on the movements of naval forces in the postwar past, and was, in fact, the originator of one of the few naval confidence-building agreements to take concrete form in the postwar period—the bilateral U.S.-Soviet Agreement on Prevention of Incidents On and Above the High Seas (INCSEA) in 1972.

Still, in looking at the positions the two sides have taken thus far, it is difficult to locate much common ground. The Soviet Union has cast so many lines with so many different lures that it is difficult to guess what it is fishing for or whether it has serious expectations of a catch at all. Moscow has yet to clarify the linkages between naval aspects and negotiations on conventional forces in Europe or, indeed, the linkages between and among its divergent naval proposals. Thus far, the Soviet Union has yet to make a cogent case that there is something worth negotiating in the naval sphere at all. The United States points to the haziness, complexity, and general irrelevancy of confidence-building in naval matters, and has raised a number of other objections. The bottom line is that the Soviet Union lacks a manageable and coherent menu for negotiation, and the United States lacks sufficient incentives to enter into negotiations at all.

That is the legacy. It is a complicated web of considerations about naval power, confidence-building in its varied and multiple shadings, naval arms control and the law of the sea, Soviet public diplomacy over the course of the past 30-plus years, and the West's traditional aversion to subjecting global naval forces to regional arms control regimes, regardless of how large and encompassing the "regions" involved might be.

### **SOVIET OPTIONS**

What about the future? For the Soviet Union, eager to negotiate constraints on U.S. naval activities, the situation ahead cannot look good. If the United States and NATO have had few incentives to discuss naval limitations up to now, the Soviet

calculation has to be that the West will have even fewer incentives in the period to come. Holding progress on other arms control fronts hostage to Western concessions in the naval area is no longer (if it ever was) a real option for the Soviet Union. With the virtual collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) in the final months of 1989, Moscow has few game-deciding cards to play in Vienna or elsewhere.

Yet, to abandon the subject entirely in the face of blanket Western resistance is scarcely a Soviet option either. For the Soviet leadership, in both a military and a political sense, there is an important element of balance and equity. In the words of a member of the Soviet General Staff: "NATO has superiority in strike aviation and naval forces. Elementary fairness and interest in security says that we cannot unilaterally have one set of imbalances removed and another set not removed." To the Soviet leadership, the East has made all or most of the important arms control concessions in recent years.

If the foregoing is so (and perceived by the Soviet leadership to be so), future Soviet options are fairly limited. The Soviet Union may opt to do nothing differently. Keeping the public pressure on the United States, even if unlikely to result in naval concessions, may nonetheless have a useful propaganda and political value. The gain may be small, but the price to be paid for staying on the present course is equally small.

There is a second option, however. Moscow may realize, indeed may already have realized, that there is more ritualism than relevance in its approach to naval limitations, and that a more discretely tailored package of naval arrangements would serve its interests better than its present overtures. In this case, it may calculate that the potential benefits of a modest arrangement with the West outweigh the costs of sacrificing cherished but realistically unreachable aspirations. Accordingly, the Soviet Union might return to the drawing board, narrow and refine its naval limitations agenda, and come forward eventually with a series of proposals that would (a) arguably be more acceptable to the West, and (b) in any case make it harder for the United States and NATO to reject out of hand.

In this vein, a hard-headed Soviet review of the Soviet approach to date might well conclude several things:

- Traditional Soviet perceptions of the U.S. naval threat to Soviet security are, in some instances at least, outdated and exaggerated.
- Much that the Soviet Union has traditionally urged in the naval sphere mixes together a small number of propositions that have a plausible military and security content with a wider array of proposals that are almost entirely



political in character; it is precisely the political mischievousness of a number of Soviet naval proposals that makes them wholly unacceptable to the West.

- The current Soviet agenda in the naval area is simply too hydra-headed, disjointed, and unfocused to be taken seriously in the West.
- The Soviet habit of offering up proposals that are one-sided in formulation and lopsided in implication scarcely advances Soviet interests; with the West entering the picture with few incentives to negotiate to begin with, the habit is self-defeating.
- A number of Soviet ideas—from strategic ASW sanctuaries to protect sea-based nuclear retaliatory forces to various “keep-out,” “keep-in,” and “thin-out” areas concerning naval presence—have simply not been thought through.
- At a time when the geostrategic equation is undergoing profound but unpredictable transformation, this is not the time to negotiate constraints that would impinge on future flexibility or that would require radical departures from familiar patterns and arrangements.

To push the point further, a rational Soviet calculus might conclude that naval propositions are more likely to be credible (and thus arguably more acceptable) when

- The arrangements proposed correspond plausibly and directly to East-West security interests (that is, they do not wander into political matters and geographical areas unrelated to security concerns, or seek to capture and constrain nonrelevant assets and activities).
- Potential spill-overs to (and perhaps unhappy precedents in) larger political/legal issues concerning freedom of navigation and jurisdictional rights in the seas are carefully avoided.
- The ideas themselves are relatively simple in execution and verifiable in implementation.
- Radical solutions requiring significant departures from current policies, patterns, and practices are avoided.
- Participation and arrangements are less rather than more formal.

To apply such narrowing principles will be difficult for the Soviet Union. It would mean jettisoning a number of ideas with which Moscow has long been associated:

nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs), antisubmarine warfare (ASW) sanctuaries, virtually all naval presence limitations, and most operational constraints. It would entail explicit acceptance that the United States will continue to have a significant comparative advantage over the Soviet Union in the naval sphere. It would feature a more limited but not unuseful definition of confidence-building to, in one observer's words, "encourage military organizations to be more forthcoming about the size, structure and activities of their forces."

There is a third Soviet option as well. The Soviet Union might seek to redefine the agenda entirely by reaching beyond confidence-building measures to bolder forms of structural arms control. Up to now, Soviet proposals have played against areas of U.S. naval strength. This is understandable, but also self-defeating. It provides no incentives to the United States to enter into negotiations. There is, however, an area in which the Soviet Union could play from its own area of strength. The USSR has a vast numerical superiority in general purpose attack submarines (between 260 and 280 to 92 in the United States). Unlike multi-mission, multi-purpose aircraft carriers, the attack submarine inventories of the Soviet Union and the United States are rationalized chiefly in East-West security terms. Within broad bounds, fewer Soviet submarines should translate into a requirement for fewer U.S. submarines, and vice versa. Suppose, then, the Soviet Union were to propose a steep, asymmetrical reduction in attack submarine inventories to, say, a common level of 50 or 60, with perhaps some limited compensation to the Soviets in the final ceiling to account for some numbers of British and French attack submarines?

Certainly the Soviet Union would be giving up more than it would be getting in return (at or greater than a 4:1 ratio), but it would also be reducing the U.S. attack submarine force by as much as half, reducing in turn the U.S. attack submarine threat to bastioned Soviet strategic retaliatory forces, and significantly reducing replacement costs for its own tactical submarine force. Such an arrangement would significantly reduce operating costs on both sides. The Soviet Union might, in addition, seek to combine such a proposal with an additional proposal to eliminate all nonstrategic nuclear weaponry at sea—a Soviet objective that historically has been resisted by the West, but which might, in the Soviet calculation, be more difficult to resist if wedded to so sharp a drop in the Soviet attack submarine inventory.

Is any such possibility in the offing? For now, the answer appears to be no. Discussions by the author with Soviet officials in 1990 suggest no near-term movement beyond current Soviet proposals. In the longer term, the matter is less clear.

## U.S. OPTIONS

For the United States, the case for naval arms control measures, within or beyond confidence-building, is less readily apparent. Although strictly informational kinds of naval confidence-building (data exchanges, notifications, observations) may be benign or marginally useful, opening the door to such measures runs the risk of letting in a host of other, unacceptable intrusions on naval operations. Drawing lines in the oceans, which in effect is what much of naval confidence-building is about, asymmetrically benefits the lesser power (the USSR) over the greater (the United States).

The case is more persuasive, however, when the subject is actual force reductions instead of constraints on operations. Of the two consistent Soviet naval threats to U.S. naval forces, the Soviet attack submarine poses a 360-degree threat nearly everywhere in the world (the other threat, Soviet land-based naval aviation, has greater range limitations). Vast U.S. and NATO sums are devoted to ASW, on, above, and below the sea. Negotiations to downsize the Soviet attack submarine force to a parity with (also downsized) U.S. submarine forces would have salutary consequences in cost and security terms. Coupling such a measure with mutual reductions and/or eliminations of tactical naval nuclear ordnance (where the Soviet Union enjoys a marginal numerical superiority over the U.S. Navy) might make a submarine reduction more palatable to the Soviet Union.

U.S. options in the period ahead, then, are somewhat simpler than, but also somewhat similar to (though in the obverse), Soviet options. The United States may continue to hold the line at essentially a "no talks" policy, at least until the Soviet Union becomes considerably more disciplined, focused, and specific about what it seeks in the naval arena, why it seeks it, and what it is prepared to settle for. Indeed, in the short run, this may be the only real option for the United States.

Second, the United States might seek to penetrate the maze of present Soviet confidence-building offerings, with a view toward isolating manageable possibilities from unacceptable ideas, and pursuing the former while drawing a "no talks" line more discretely around the latter. Analytically, this is not that difficult a task. In reality, however, the attempt could be hazardous, precisely because of the absence of any seeming limit on Soviet ambitions in this area. With the Soviets thus far unable or unwilling to draw their own lines in terms of naval limitations, it is scarcely illogical for the United States to worry about whether there are any lines at all. To enter negotiations in these circumstances might not produce real or discrete negotiations, but instead an uncongenial and open-ended grab for Western concessions.

There is a third option. Although the Soviet predilection is to engage in formal (and formally binding) negotiations on confidence-building measures, the United States has considerable latitude to undertake unilateral measures that might accomplish much the same things, without the complications that are posed when these are reduced to parchment. If, as seems inevitable, the United States will continue to have a comparative advantage over the Soviet Union in the naval sphere, it seems logical that the United States assume a greater burden of self-restraint in the deployments and operations of its naval forces. So long as the United States is not bound by explicit agreements to do so, it has considerable flexibility to spread confidence by tacit measures. Large exercises might be held less frequently, or further removed from areas of particular sensitivity to the Soviet Union, or unilaterally announced in advance, or accompanied by invitations for Soviet observers. The logic behind such self-restraint is straightforward: it does not appear to be in the long-term interest of the United States to leave Moscow entirely unrequited in its naval concerns or to disregard its general complaints of imbalance and unfairness in current arms control arrangements.

The shape of a bargain might materialize in another way as well. That the Soviet Union might conclude that the potential in negotiating sharp reductions in submarine inventories outweighs the drawbacks from a narrow Soviet perspective scarcely precludes the West from reaching a similar judgment on its own.

#### **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

One possible outcome in the period ahead will be simply more of the same—with the Soviet Union arguing for the West to “just say yes” to naval negotiations, and the West just as firmly just saying “no.” This will be tempting (indeed, it will be somewhat logical) in the case of the United States so long as the Soviet Union stays on its present track. It may be less appealing to the Soviet Union, however, precisely because the track it is on does not seem to lead in a very happy direction.

More of the same, however, is not the only course. When looked at closely, naval confidence-building measures tend to fall into either of two categories: the manageable but marginal, and the unmanageable and unacceptable. This still leaves room for modest accommodations that may be helpful even if inconvenient. In any case, beyond confidence-building, although the prospects are certainly fewer in number, they are much bolder in conception and potential impacts.

### **WHO LEADS, WHO FOLLOWS?**

Were the Soviet Union to take the lead along any of the several lines discussed above, pressures on the United States to respond affirmatively no doubt would intensify. This might not be bad, and conceivably could be beneficial, for both sides. Given everything else that is happening in East-West relationships, it will be increasingly difficult for the United States to hew to a no-talks posture in any case. A key question is whether the Soviet leadership is prepared to reach beyond drawing confidence-building lines in the oceans to embrace and propose significant cuts in such things as attack submarines *and* nonstrategical naval nuclear ordnance. In the near-term, such a prospect does not appear to be in the offing, in part, at least, because of strenuous objections from the Soviet navy. Yet, the Soviet political leadership has embraced similar kinds of asymmetrical reductions over internal opposition in the past, and has demonstrated, if nothing else, that the near term can be very short indeed.

To a large extent, the United States is similarly encumbered. The U.S. Navy wants nothing to do with even minor naval arms control measures. The prospect of negotiating actual cuts in U.S. naval platforms and weapons would be fiercely resisted from within. Here, too, however, the near term may be very transitory. The U.S. naval build-up of the 1980s has given way to a naval build-down in the 1990s. Facing a new set of strategic and budgetary realities, the United States may sooner than later want to explore the possibilities that lie beyond naval confidence-building.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I am grateful to RAND colleagues Paul Davis and William Schwabe for their careful review of an earlier draft of this Note. I alone, of course, am responsible for what follows.

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## GLOSSARY

AAW	Antiair warfare
ASW	Antisubmarine warfare
ATTU	Atlantic-to-the-Urals
BBBG	Battleship battle group
CBM	Confidence-building measures
CDE	Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe
CFE	Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CSBM	Confidence- and security-building measure
CTOL	Conventional take-off and landing
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
INCSEA	Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the Seas
NCND	Neither confirm nor deny (presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships)
NNA	Neutral and non-aligned
NWFZ	Nuclear-weapon-free zone
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SLBM	Sea-launched ballistic missile
SLCM	Sea-launched cruise missile
SNA	Soviet land-based naval aviation
SSBN	Strategic ballistic missile submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDC	United Nations Disarmament Commission
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization

## I. INTRODUCTION

The logical first step would be confidence-building measures in the naval area . . . . We are prepared to listen carefully to all counterproposals on ways and means of confidence-building at sea, guarantees of safety for maritime communications and freedom of navigation.

— Soviet Delegate (Petrovsky), United Nations  
Disarmament Commission, October 1988<sup>1</sup>

Since early 1986, the Soviet Union has intensified its public diplomacy campaign to engage the United States and the Western allies in negotiations aimed at limiting general-purpose naval forces and activities.<sup>2</sup> Thus far, the West's response has been negative. The U.S. position is that naval forces should continue to be excluded from negotiations in Vienna on conventional forces in Europe and should not be the subject of separate talks either. "The firm position of the United States," the Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency told a UN Committee in October 1988, is that "the United States cannot agree to any arms limitations or additional constraints on its naval activities."<sup>3</sup>

Most of the Soviet Union's proposals since 1986 entail measures that might be broadly viewed as naval "confidence-building." In the distinction drawn by Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin in another context—"Arms control . . . may involve the straightforward elimination of armaments . . . or may involve communications, traffic rules, or other arrangements superimposed on military establishments"<sup>4</sup>—naval confidence-building is essentially the sum of everything that might logically fall within the second category. The single common denominator is that confidence-building measures do not normally, immediately, or directly restrict the size and composition of naval forces per se.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet menu of naval confidence-building propositions is wide-ranging. Some proposals embody relatively simple matters with which, in other contexts (and in the naval context in the past), the United States has not seriously quarreled: such things as general

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), First Committee, *Verbatim Record of the 4th Meeting*, October 18, 1988, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>"General purpose" forces are the near-sum of the navies of the relevant parties and include both conventionally armed and nuclear-capable units, systems, and armaments. The only things excluded are sea-based strategic nuclear systems: ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).

<sup>3</sup>William F. Burns, October 18, 1988, quoted in *Department of State Bulletin*, January 1989, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*, Pergamon-Brassey's, London, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>That is, they do not directly impose limitations on numbers, types, sizes, and capabilities of naval weapons, platforms, systems, and units.

information exchanges, crisis hot-lines, and provisions for the prevention and resolution of incidents at sea. Others are far-reaching and contentious. The Soviet Union has proposed, variously, to freeze or mutually withdraw naval forces from a number of sea areas, limit or ban all naval operations in major shipping lanes, restrict and/or require advance notification and observation of naval exercises and maneuvers, require announcement of the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on ships making port calls, ban nuclear weapons entirely in areas to be established as nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ), prohibit antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces from sea-area sanctuaries to be designated ASW-free zones, eliminate or strictly limit the number of deployed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs), set strict distances from other-party coastlines in which some or all naval forces may not operate, and eliminate all foreign naval bases and support facilities. In some cases, the proposals have been region-specific, covering all or parts of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, the Baltic Sea, and the Greenland, Norwegian, and North Seas. In other cases, the measures proposed are essentially global in reach and implication.

In March 1989 in Vienna, a subset of these proposals was tabled formally at the 35-nation Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE) to cover naval operations in waters around Europe. The Vienna package calls for notification and observation of naval exercises above a certain size and composition; overall limitations on the size, frequency, and duration of naval exercises; prohibitions of naval exercises entirely in "zones of intense shipping and fishing" and "straits of international significance"; and a comprehensive multilateral agreement on "prevention of incidents in sea areas and airspace adjoining Europe."

#### **THE PERIOD AND OPTIONS AHEAD**

The Soviet Union is not likely to relax its interest in or pressures for naval limitations in the period to come in Vienna or elsewhere. Measured by such things as numbers and sizes of naval exercises, and away-from-home-waters (out-of-area) ship days, its own naval operations have been in general decline since the mid-1980s. The Soviet leadership would like to see the U.S. Navy in a more constrained posture as well. In the Soviet view, the East has made all or most of the major concessions in Vienna on conventional force reductions in Europe; political developments in Eastern Europe in 1989 have (or should have) removed any vestiges of Western concern about a fast-breaking Soviet attack on the continent; "the naval problem" is the last big area of arms control yet to be addressed; the time to address it, in the words of Mikhail

Gorbachev, "has come."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Soviet Union perceives (correctly) that there is more than casual interest in naval limitations among the neutral and non-aligned (NNA) participants in the negotiations in Vienna, within NATO, and elsewhere in the world.

Although the United States is not alone in the West in opposing Soviet naval overtures, its opposition has been the most vigorously and expansively asserted in recent years. The U.S. Chief of Naval Operations told an audience at the Soviet Naval School in Leningrad in October 1989 that Soviet proposals in this area are "attempts to abrogate commonly accepted international laws with respect to freedom of the high seas." The U.S. Navy "must be free to operate when and where deterrent presence is required . . . unimpeded by restrictive sanctions."<sup>7</sup> The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations told the Congress the preceding April that "any arms control agreement restricting naval flexibility or capabilities would weaken the West's deterrent posture and consequently decrease Western security."<sup>8</sup> So far as the Vienna negotiations on conventional forces in Europe are concerned, President Reagan said in May 1988,

As naval forces tend to have global, not region-specific, commitments and responsibilities, it would seem inappropriate to regulate their activities in the context of a regional security regime. Moreover, compliance with restrictions on naval/air maneuvers over the high seas would be extremely difficult—indeed, impossible for most countries—to verify.

For these and other reasons, East and West have traditionally agreed to omit naval forces from conventional arms control negotiations in Europe . . . . We continue to believe this is the best course.<sup>9</sup>

Current U.S. policy is not etched in concrete, however, nor has the United States ruled out all possibilities in all circumstances for all time. Though the fact is seldom showcased in the public record, the United States has endorsed or otherwise accepted a number of international limitations on the movements of naval forces in the postwar past, and was, in fact, the originator of one of the few naval confidence-building agreements to take concrete form in the postwar period—the bilateral U.S.-Soviet Agreement on Prevention of Incidents On and Above the High Seas (INCSEA) in 1972.

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<sup>6</sup>See, for example, "Excerpts from Bush-Gorbachev News Conference," *Washington Post*, December 4, 1989, p. A22; and the interview with Sergei Akromeyev, "A Soldier Talks Peace," *Time*, November 13, 1989, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, *Unexpected Opportunity* (news release), No. 456-89, October 12, 1989, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Vice Admiral Charles R. Larson, "Statement on Naval Arms Control Before the Seapower Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee," April 27, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>News conference, Washington, D.C., May 26, 1988.

In the face of what is likely to be an abiding, probably increasing, interest in this general area, the United States will have three broad options. These are:

- Continue to resist naval confidence-building-type proposals by the Soviet Union and others, whatever their content and whenever and wherever they appear.
- Penetrate the current maze of Soviet propositions, with the idea of pursuing reasonable (or plausible, or manageable) ideas and rejecting others.
- Counterpropose entirely different or additional ideas of its own, or differently formulated variations on Soviet ideas, that might better and more realistically balance Soviet and American interests in the naval sphere.

Choosing among these options, will depend, in part, on answers to three related questions:

- Whether, from a U.S. perspective, there are particular possibilities in this area, currently proposed or plausibly imagined, that solve some problem or provide some opportunity of military or political interest, and thereby warrant a closer look and possible pursuit.
- If so, whether it is reasonable to expect that possibilities of interest can be realistically separated from the rest and made the subject of discrete discussion, negotiation, or arrangement.
- If so again, whether (and how) the possibilities can be formulated and pursued in ways that take full account of U.S. strategical, political, and diplomatic interests.

The Soviet Union also will have choices to make in the coming period, and the course of its thinking is bound to affect U.S. policy options as well. In this vein, the Soviet Union will have at least three broad options. These are:

- Continue on its present course of advancing widely divergent naval limitations whenever and wherever there are political opportunities to do so.
- Refine and put forward an agenda that, arguably, is more acceptable to the West or at least more difficult for the West to reject out of hand.
- Reach beyond confidence-building to other, potentially bolder forms of naval arms control in the East-West context.

## **THIS NOTE**

This Note concerns both sides' future options, both within and beyond naval confidence-building. It seeks to place these options within a broader context of history, strategy, law, diplomacy, and negotiation policy, with a view toward illuminating how each side might view its choices, and how decisions made by one might influence the options available to the other. The examination is neither predictive nor prescriptive; it aims only to explore alternative choices and the interactions these might establish. In this vein, "future" is not constrained by any fixed vision of the nature or timing of events. It is merely not today; it could be as early as tomorrow.

The next two sections provide the general backdrop. Section II briefly reviews the postwar evolution and current dimensions of naval power. Confidence-building measures tend to speak to only some navies, and only some naval operations and activities. The discussion in Sec. II is intended to round out the context and to illuminate aspects of naval power that are (or should be) germane when looking at future choices. Section III provides similar background on naval confidence-building. Where confidence-building begins and leaves off, what it entails, how it relates (or may relate) to other forms of arms control and other regulations of the use of the seas, and how regional and global considerations interact in this area—none of these is self-evident. The discussion traces general patterns and enduring ambiguities, as these too may be relevant in future considerations.

Sections IV and V examine the more immediate frames of reference. Section IV briefly reviews recent Soviet public diplomacy in the naval area, the competition of naval proposals at the CDE in Vienna, and the wider context (beyond Vienna) in which the Soviet Union seeks to engage the West in naval discussions. Section V discusses the galaxy of specific Soviet propositions, both in and beyond the European talks, along with the West's responses to these proposals to date. Though variously phrased, seldom detailed, and often jumbled together, Soviet propositions may be broadly distinguished along four lines: information measures, INCSEA-like navigational "rules of the road," operational constraints, and presence limitations. By and large, Soviet proposals in each of these categories are one-sided in formulation and lopsided in implication. It is not surprising that the West has thus far shown little interest in anything the East has had to offer.

Remaining sections deal with the future. Given that U.S. reluctance to engage in naval negotiations is likely to continue, at least in the near term, Sec. VI explores the considerations that may (or perhaps should) enter into Soviet decisionmaking in the future. Were the Soviet leadership to review its future options critically and candidly, what would it (should it) think about, and to what potential result? Similar questions about U.S. options are examined in Sec. VII. What does naval confidence-building in its many forms contribute to U.S. interests?

What would the United States need to think about in the event the Soviet Union exercised a different set of options in this area? What might the United States want to consider on its own in any case? Section VIII reviews the principal points of preceding sections and discusses what these suggest for the period ahead. Section IX provides an afterword. In February 1990, at a Soviet-sponsored International Seminar on Naval Arms Control in Moscow, several of the ideas in this Note were informally discussed. Section IX briefly describes the initial Soviet reaction.

## OTHER STUDIES

There is an abundant literature on navies, naval arms control, and naval confidence-building, but no known study seeks to analyze linkages and options in the terms described above. Perhaps the single best current overview of Soviet naval proposals is an issue brief by Ronald O'Rourke of the Congressional Research Service.<sup>10</sup> John Borawski, a British analyst who has written extensively on naval confidence-building measures over the years, has provided a detailed analysis of the East's Vienna proposal.<sup>11</sup> Equally detailed, though much broader in scope, is a 1988 report by the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment.<sup>12</sup>

There are also many articles and essays on one aspect or another, but these tend to be selective in emphasis and perspective. While there are no recent unclassified U.S. government studies or analyses that are directly on point, the U.S. Navy leadership has written, spoken, and testified about various dimensions on a number of occasions in 1988 and 1989. For its part, the Soviet Union has produced no studies to speak of. Characteristically, Soviet papers and working drafts are heavy on policy directions and generalized aspirations and shy on details and analytical support.

## RELATED NOTES

This Note forms part of a larger unclassified study of issues and options in naval arms control. The study is intended to provide a multi-dimensioned framework for conceiving, evaluating, and potentially negotiating naval arms control possibilities in the future. Other Notes in the study, by the same author, are:

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<sup>10</sup>Ronald O'Rourke, *Naval Arms Control* (issue brief), Congressional Research Service, 1B89132, updated November 18, 1989.

<sup>11</sup>John Borawski, "Slow Train Coming: Naval Confidence-Building Measures Revisited," *Naval Forces*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1989.

<sup>12</sup>Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, *Confidence-Building Measures at Sea*, FFI/Rapport-88/5002, Forsvarets Forskningsinstitut, Kjeller, Norway, November 1988.



- *Naval Arms Control: The Backdrop of History* (N-3120-USDP, August 1990) reviews the historical experience in negotiating naval limitations over the course of the past 150-plus years, with a view toward illuminating the kinds of lessons and conclusions that might be relevant in present circumstances.
- *The Baroque Debate: Public Diplomacy and Naval Arms Control, 1986-1989* (N-3121-USDP, August 1990) examines the public diplomacy of naval limitations in the Gorbachev period: what the Soviet Union and others have had to say about the subject, how the United States and others in the West have responded to date, and what the current debate suggests so far as clarity, probity, and future pressures in this area are concerned.
- *Between Worlds: Europe and the Seas in Arms Control* (N-3123-USDP, August 1990) reviews questions of forum and procedure—with particular emphasis on the linkages perceived by some between naval arrangements and ongoing negotiations in Vienna on nonnaval conventional forces in Europe—and examines alternative ways in which naval subjects might sensibly be pursued in the Vienna context.

## II. DIMENSIONS OF NAVAL POWER

A deployed fleet has unique advantages over other military units. On station around the world, conducting live operations, presence, and training, it is never far from the scene of a new crisis. Arriving just over the horizon, it immediately transforms the strategic equation, while remaining in international waters where it needs no foreign government's permission to operate. If force is required, that force can be applied with precision, with little risk of escalation, and without committing troops ashore. Once the crisis is over, the ships simply change course for a new operating area, without needing to regroup and without signalling retreat.

— Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, USN,  
Chief of Naval Operations, 1988<sup>1</sup>

Naval confidence-building is about navies and naval power. Yet, conceptions of naval power implicit in many naval confidence-building propositions are not always clear, current, balanced, or complete.<sup>2</sup> Confidence-building tends to be about only certain navies and, within them, only about certain functions, assets, activities, and capabilities. In the East-West context, the navies of primary interest understandably are Soviet and American, but these are scarcely the sum of naval power in the world, nor can they be viewed in this setting without referring to a wider set of considerations.

### SEA POWER IN CONTEXT

War at sea has always been different from war on land. On land, the issue is the possession and occupation of territory. At sea, the objective is not to occupy, but to dominate. "Command of the seas" has meant two things over the centuries: *control* of the seas for one's strategical purposes, and *denial* of the use of the seas to opponents. Spatial and temporal relationships are different at sea. The oceans do not lend themselves to occupation, nor do vital ocean areas take precise and definite forms. Supremacy at sea is not normally an objective in its own terms, but a means to some larger political or military objective. Dominance of vital ocean areas can ensure national survival (by, for example, assuring unhampered supply routes for food and war materials) and is a means toward achieving victory on land (by allowing for the invasion of foreign territory,

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<sup>1</sup> Carlisle A. H. Trost, USN, "The Soviet Naval Arms Control Offensive: Cut the Cards—Watch the Dealer," Address to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs, Baltimore, Maryland, March 7, 1988; reprinted in *Vital Speeches*, Vol. LIV, No. 14, May 1, 1988, p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Till has described the concept of naval power as "probably the most obscure in the whole lexicon of maritime strategy." See Geoffrey Till et al., *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1982, p. 12.

blockading an enemy's sea-borne supplies and movements, massing strategic forces for purposes of war termination on favorable terms, and the like). In the turn-of-the-century characterization of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the seas are "a great highway" for military and commercial transport. For Mahan and the generations of naval theorists and practitioners that followed, the nation that controls communication at sea controls the situation.<sup>3</sup>

Sea power is distinctive in other respects as well. Only a handful of nations invest in and employ a full range of naval capabilities. One may categorize the world's navies in a variety of ways, but when it comes to denoting "major" naval power, the number of qualifying nations has always been small. Although the same can be said of armies and air forces, going to sea in a big way has always required a special kind of strategic interest and commitment.

In the hands of its possessors, naval power is a uniquely flexible instrument of national policy in peacetime. A naval force capable of operating far from home waters has a significant capacity for involvement in and influence over regional disputes and crises. Unlike land forces and land-based air forces, naval forces do not require basing and logistical support from countries in the area. Operating in international waters, naval forces present minimal intrusions on local sovereignty and thus carry relatively modest connotations of military intervention and few, if any, connotations of military occupation. Naval diplomacy has always been a two-sided coin: it can be cooperative (goodwill port visits, the furnishing of humanitarian assistance) or coercive (intended to influence behavior through the threat or imposition of violent sanctions). Coercive naval diplomacy can be as tranquil as establishing over time a more or less permanent naval presence in an ocean area or region; it can take the form of quickly massing naval power outside the territorial waters of a state as an expression of interest and resolve; or it can involve still more aggressive measures—blocking naval traffic, limited sea-based attacks, or full-scale assaults from the sea.

As subjects of arms control, the more versatile naval forces, by the very nature of their inherent flexibility, are difficult to regulate in regional terms. Armies and even air forces, once removed from an area, take time to reinsert in times of crisis and war. Naval forces, on the other hand, never leave an area permanently. "Only at sea . . . can such a broad variety of usable national military power be brought to bear when needed, and then

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<sup>3</sup>A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History 1660-1783*, Nethuen, London, 1965, Chapter 1 (first published in 1890).

disappear over the horizon when no longer needed."<sup>4</sup> Only at sea can forces, having once disappeared, return with such mass, ease, and relative alacrity.

Quite apart from arms control and security interests, the seas are regulated. While warships traditionally have been treated separately, military and nonmilitary uses of the seas tend to overlap. Over 70 percent of the earth's surface is sea, and over two-thirds of the world's population lives within 300 kilometers of a coastline. Conflicts over rights to the seas and sea-beds have been a recurring feature of the law and politics of the sea in the postwar era, with coastal states seeking to extend their sovereignty and jurisdiction over adjoining sea areas, and maritime nations looking to preserve as much unhampered freedom of navigation as possible. Naval forces, and confidence-building propositions to limit their range and activities, enter this picture in two ways. Navies serve traditionally to assert, police, and enforce claims about jurisdiction, sovereignty, and freedom of navigation in disputed water areas. Indeed, "the primary aim of most of the naval powers in time of peace has traditionally been to reinforce the 'freedom of the seas.'"<sup>5</sup> By the same token, limitations imposed on naval movements, through confidence-building and other forms of arms control, are not always easily distinguishable from wider jurisdictional restrictions at sea. Precedents set in one area tend to have longer-term implications for the other, and vice versa.

#### **TRADITIONS OF A WORLD APART**

Before World War II it was commonplace to think of naval power as a thing apart. The distinction between land war and sea war was still sharp enough (or so it was widely perceived) to permit individual, virtually exclusive strategies and forces for each. The principal purpose of a navy was to defeat another navy. Blockades and offshore bombardments were accepted as legitimate and useful extensions of naval power, but the main action for which the major naval nations built their forces was the fleet-on-fleet engagement at sea. Indeed, destruction of the opposing fleet was not only the prime objective, it was also thought by many naval strategists to be the only thing that really mattered. Testifying before Congress in 1944, Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy during World War I, described the U.S. Navy's thinking in this way:

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<sup>4</sup>George H. Quester, "Maritime Issues in Avoiding Nuclear War," *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Winter 1987, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup>D. P. O'Connell, *The Influence of Law on Sea Power*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1975, p. 1.

They had a War College at Newport [Rhode Island] where [for 50 years] studies were directed on the theory that the fate of war would depend on a great naval battle in which the ships of this and an enemy country would be engaged. It was accepted that the country whose armada lost would accept the defeat as decisive and sue for peace.<sup>6</sup>

Although mine and submarine warfare did not fit easily within the theory (exceptions that Germany put to devastating effect in World War I), the surface fleet—and within the surface fleet, the large capital ship—preoccupied the major naval powers. Strength at sea was measured by the numbers, size, and firing power of the battleship and the heavy cruiser. The airplane was not ignored in the interwar years (in the U.S. case, it was an integral part of fleet operations from 1921 onward) but its place in naval strategy and force-building was, for most of the naval powers, relatively modest.

Such naval arms control as was attempted tended to mirror these emphases. Naval limitations were negotiated in strictly naval terms, seldom with any reference to “non-naval” forces and considerations. The emphases were mostly on the large capital units. Ceilings on naval shipbuilding, and restrictions on naval movements, commonly were expressed in terms of the tonnage and firepower of fleets at sea.

#### THE POSTWAR TRANSFORMATION

World War II and the events it set in motion made much of the earlier pattern, if not obsolete, then at least not immediately applicable. The world was a different place after the war, with a very different naval concept and balance.

Among other things, the war meant a redistribution of naval power. Before the war, it was possible to think of three (perhaps four) major naval powers—Britain, the United States, Japan (and Germany)—and several not-insignificant medium powers—France, Italy, China, and perhaps the Belgian and Dutch navies. The United States emerged from the war as a true, global naval power. The Japanese, German, and Italian fleets were no more; China’s fleet was insignificant; France had a diminished naval capability; under fiscal pressures at home, Britain’s Royal Navy gradually receded in size and overseas presence, as did the Dutch and Belgian fleets. Though possessed of a sizable submarine force (the Soviet Union was believed to have 213 submarines at war’s end), the Soviet Union was still more a traditional continental land power than a factor at sea. “The future of Russia as a naval power cannot be foreseen,” the U.S. Navy reported

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<sup>6</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, hearings of the Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, *Proposal to Establish a Single Department of the Armed Services*, 78th Congress, 2d Session (1944), p. 249.

in its first demobilization plan in 1943, "but it is reasonable to assume that this arm of her military forces will be considerably increased."<sup>7</sup>

A second change had to do with the nature of naval warfare. Wartime uses of airpower shattered irrevocably the traditional boundary—the coastline—separating land and naval warfare. Land-based aircraft contributed to control of the sea and sea-launched planes to the course and conduct of ground warfare. The result was that there was more (and in some respects less) to naval power after 1945 than before. In the face of dramatic advances in the range of aircraft during and after the war, a fleet at sea was much more vulnerable to air (later missile) attacks launched from land. But this cut both ways. Aircraft (later missiles) launched from platforms at sea could now attack a much broader range of targets than the 25 miles provided during the war by battleship batteries or the 250 miles that limited wartime carrier-based aircraft. The U.S. Navy became increasingly linked in the postwar period to attacks against land targets—not only traditional "naval" targets such as shipyards, submarine pens, and naval airfields, but all land targets within the range of Navy guns, missiles, and aircraft. In the launching of the Polaris fleet ballistic missile submarine in the early 1960s, the U.S. Navy acquired a platform that had only this purpose and these targets.

This meant, in turn, that projection of force ashore and defense against force projected from land were much more central to naval combat after 1945 than before. Although sea control and sea denial are still among what Michael McGuire has called the "enabling functions" of naval forces, the adaptations that followed the war (made by other navies as well) widened both the conception and the reality of contemporary naval forces. Not only do these consist of sea-based systems used at sea, they also embody sea-based systems targeted against land and land-based systems that can be brought to bear at sea.<sup>8</sup>

In keeping with this, naval airpower was a great postwar enthusiasm. The battleship and the heavy cruiser—the principal symbols and measures of naval power in the 50 years leading up to World War II—largely disappeared from the scene. On V-J Day, the U.S. Navy already had 20 large carriers, 8 light carriers, and 71 carrier escorts, compared with less than a dozen battleships. Even before V-J Day, Pacific theater task

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<sup>7</sup>The postwar history, through the early 1980s, is recounted in James L. Lacy, *Within Bounds: The Navy in Postwar American Security Policy*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, November 1983.

<sup>8</sup>Michael McGuire, "Soviet-American Naval Arms Control," in George Quester (ed.), *Navies and Arms Control*, Praeger, New York, 1980, p. 52.

force commanders had recommended construction of still larger carriers to handle heavier aircraft; by late 1945, design studies were under way; by mid-1946, a new, large, "flush-deck" carrier had been approved for planning purposes by the Navy leadership.

The United States was not alone in seeking to exploit airpower based at sea, but only the United States and France have entered the 1990s maintaining a consistent interest in the premier naval power projection capabilities of the conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) carrier. For other navies—in 1990, nine navies had one or more carriers in service—the more limited capabilities of "jump jets" and other vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft have been the delivery systems of strategic choice or fiscal necessity.<sup>9</sup>

In a development subsequently followed by the other nuclear powers, nuclear ordnance was very soon an integral part of the U.S. Navy's weapons mix. By late 1948, the Navy had demonstrated (at least to its own satisfaction) two propositions: that surface fleets were not obsolete in the atomic age and that they could perform useful atomic functions. The Eisenhower administration—committed to "keeping our boys at our side," avoiding grinding land wars of attrition (like Korea), sure that military efficiency and national economy required greater emphasis on firepower than on military manpower—viewed nuclear ordnance as the best answer to any number of questions. Like the other U.S. military services, the Navy "went nuclear" in the 1950s. Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China later followed suit, with both strategic nuclear systems at sea (patterned on the U.S. Polaris) and tactical nuclear weaponry.

At the same time, the steady postwar decline of prewar colonial systems, coupled with the emergence of new nations in Asia and Africa, presented a power vacuum and a source of contention that drew the U.S. Navy increasingly toward concerns about lesser powers, few of which had any traditional naval capability to speak of. Portugal and the Netherlands maintained a naval presence in the Pacific and Indian Oceans when they had colonies in these areas, but their postwar colonial decline meant as well a withering of their naval presence and naval capabilities. Colonial dismantling and unrelenting fiscal pressures at home did likewise for Britain's Royal Navy, capped (but not concluded) by London's decision in 1968 to withdraw its naval presence from all stations east of the Suez. Apart from the United States, only France among the Western powers has retained

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<sup>9</sup>The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) lists nine carrier navies among the "major" navies in 1990, though, as noted, only four are CTOL: United States, USSR, United Kingdom, France, India, Italy, Brazil, Spain, and Argentina. IISS, *The Military Balance 1989-1990*, Brassey's, London, 1989, p. 236.

a consistent overseas naval presence since the 1960s, and in France's case, almost exclusively in areas where it previously had colonies.

The Soviet Union, traditionally a land power with limited-to-no "blue-water" naval capabilities, gradually emerged as the one significant challenger to U.S. supremacy at sea. The USSR was not the first continental land power to turn to the sea (in 1898, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany boldly proclaimed that "our future lies upon the ocean," a theme that Hitler also embraced in the 1930s), nor had its predominantly submarine force, enhanced by captured German submarine technology, escaped the notice and concern of Western naval planners in the early postwar period.<sup>10</sup> In the 1950s, the Soviet Union expanded upon these submarine capabilities. In the mid-1960s, it also expanded its surface fleet and its general naval presence away from home waters.<sup>11</sup> The Soviet humiliation over Cuba in 1962 gave impetus to the study of "distant limited war" and the amphibious forces necessary to sustain it. In 1968, *Jane's Fighting Ships* reported that the Soviet navy had 55 nuclear-powered submarines, 325 conventional submarines, 100 destroyers, and hundreds of other warships. U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Thomas Moorer testified at the time that in less than a decade the Soviet Union had changed from a maritime nonentity to the world's second-largest seapower, and he cited the Soviet Union's first helicopter carrier operation in the Mediterranean as "visible evidence of Russia's announced intention to become a modern offensive sea-power."<sup>12</sup>

#### THE PRESENT WORLD OF NAVIES

As in the past, the world of navies entering the 1990s is both very large and very small. It is large because most of the nations of the world have navies. It is small because very few of the world's navies have a reach much beyond inland and territorial waters. The vast majority are coastal or "brown-water" forces—"almost exclusively deployed in waters immediately adjacent to a nation's land territory[,] executing traditional naval tasks such as maritime self-defense, protection of sovereign interests in territorial waters, protection of national economic interests in offshore waters, maritime policing and counter-smuggling duties, local search and rescue, etc."<sup>13</sup> To the extent that

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<sup>10</sup>See, generally, Lacy (1983), Chapter 2.

<sup>11</sup>The development of the postwar Soviet navy, and the Soviet embrace of traditional concepts of naval diplomacy, are discussed at length in the early chapters of Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell (eds.), *Soviet Naval Diplomacy*, Pergamon Press, New York, 1979.

<sup>12</sup>Lacy (1983), pp. 293-294.

<sup>13</sup>The characterization is drawn from United Nations, *The Naval Arms Race*, Department of Disarmament Affairs, New York, 1986, p. 17.



they venture farther afield, the deployments are invariably occasional, small in numbers and normally made as port calls and courtesy visits.

Though such navies are not insignificant—they can be matters of great concern to immediate neighbors and also to the larger naval powers, depending upon the strategic value of the waters they ply—they are not in the main major players on the world scene. Some of these “lesser” navies nonetheless have noteworthy compensating resources. Within the last decade there has been a proliferation of “cheap-kill” naval and other military systems, launched or fired from air and land, that are capable of affecting contests involving offshore naval power.<sup>14</sup> In short, a number of coastal states have developed noteworthy capabilities both to defend against power projected from the sea and to project power against forces at sea.

Beyond brown-water navies, the universe shrinks rapidly. “Blue-water” navies are “normally deployed in waters surrounding the state concerned, although often out to a significant distance from shore, and which also possess the capacity to conduct occasional deployments and limited operations in force distant from bases at home.”<sup>15</sup> There are about fifteen such navies in the world at present, perhaps half of them allied or historically friendly to the United States.<sup>16</sup> None of the non-Soviet WTO members possesses any blue-water capability to speak of, nor do the NNAs in Europe.<sup>17</sup>

#### U.S.-SOVIET NAVAL POWER

Although both of the superpower navies are large and versatile, they differ in important respects. Topography favors the United States over the Soviet Union in the naval sphere. Bordered by two oceans, with extensive coastlines that in the main are ice-free and permit open sea access all year round, the United States has natural advantages

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<sup>14</sup>To stunning effect in the Falklands, Argentina demonstrated that such systems need not be plentiful, or expensive, in order to be fearsomely destructive.

<sup>15</sup>United Nations (1986).

<sup>16</sup>The number is approximate, but close enough for purposes here. Based on the aggregate combat tonnage of ocean-capable vessels, the 1989 edition of the *Military Balance* lists 25 “major” navies in the world. When, however, the sustainability of their surface forces in a prolonged conflict remote from their national bases is factored into the equation (measured by the ratio between front-line, underway-replenishment-capable support ships to total numbers of principal surface combatants), the IISS ranks only three of the 25 (US, UK, FRG) as having a “good” level of sustainability, seven (including the Soviet navy) in a midway range, and fifteen as having “poor” sustainability (see Table 1). IISS (1989), p. 237.

<sup>17</sup>Europe’s navies are further discussed in a companion Note: Lacy, *Between Worlds: Europe and the Seas in Arms Control*, N-3123-USDP, August 1990 (1990c).

Table 1  
A VIEW OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR FLEETS<sup>a,b</sup>

Country	Combat Tonnage	Naval Manpower	Tactical Submarines	Carriers	Other Principal Surface Combatants	Afloat Support Ratio <sup>c</sup>
US	3,208,000	548,000	98 <sup>d</sup>	14	215	0.26
USSR	2,585,000	437,000	280	4	260	0.17
UK	336,000	57,000	27	2	47	0.27
China	325,000	227,000	92	0	56	0.07
Japan	242,000	44,000	14	0	63	0.03
France	229,000	63,000	16	2	42	0.16
India	170,000	46,000	17	2	26	0.07
Taiwan	121,000	35,500	4	0	36	0
Italy	113,000	51,000	10	1	29	0.07
Turkey	99,000	51,000	15	0	22	0.05
Brazil	92,000	35,300	7	1	16	0.06
Spain	84,000	30,500	8	1	28	0
Greece	80,000	19,500	10	0	21	0
Peru	77,000	22,500	11	0	14	0.14
Canada	72,000	17,100	3	0	19	0.16
Netherlands	70,000	14,100	6	0	15	0.14
Pakistan	69,000	15,000	6	0	17	0.12
Chile	66,000	22,200	4	0	11	0.18
S. Korea	61,000	35,500	3	0	28	0
FRG	60,000	36,000	24	1	14	0.29
Argentina	60,000	20,000	4	1	13	0
Australia	59,000	15,700	6	0	12	0.08
N. Korea	42,000	40,000	23	0	2	0
Indonesia	36,000	31,000	2	0	15	0.07
Egypt	30,000	20,000	10	0	6	0

SOURCE: IISS, *Military Balance, 1989-1990*, 1989, pp. 236-237.

<sup>a</sup>Listed by aggregate tonnage of ocean-capable vessels above 1,000 tons full load/dived displacement. Listing does not suggest capability for extended operations.

<sup>b</sup>Source should be consulted for qualifications on various entries.

<sup>c</sup>Ratio of front-line, underway-replenishment-capable support ships to the total number of Principal Surface Combatants (PSC). IISS suggests that a figure of 0.20 or better (i.e., one support ship to 5 PSC) indicates a good level of sustainability; 0.10 or less, poor.

<sup>d</sup>Includes two research/training boats.

in dispatching naval power around the globe. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has a very large land area with restricted access to the oceans, and much of its coastline is subject to severe ice conditions for much of the year. To get to the open seas, the Soviet navy must pass through a number of geographical "choke-points." This in turn presents strategic opportunities for the United States and other Western navies to interdict Soviet

naval movements at these ingress and egress points or to bottle up Soviet forces behind them.

But the geography of the strategic balance cuts two ways. In Europe, the East's strategical depth is on land; NATO's only real strategic depth is at sea. Even without its WTO allies, the Soviet Union has extensive land area and an extensive rail and road network with which to mobilize, move, and mass military forces against Western Europe. NATO lacks continental depth. Its wartime goods, war material, and reinforcements must come by sea, providing to the Soviet Union opportunities for interdiction, not merely on the seas but also above and below them. With direct land and air access to most of Europe and Asia, the Soviet Union has not had a great need to control the seas and sea lines of communication and has been able to concentrate more heavily on naval capabilities to deny use of the seas to the West. The United States, on the other hand, separated from its interests, allies, and commitments by vast ocean areas, has found it necessary to emphasize forward naval deployments, sea control, and projection of force from the sea. The same can be said about regions beyond Europe.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, once beyond Korea and Japan, the United States has almost no means to immediately defend and reinforce states to whose general security it is committed, except to come by sea.

The differences are manifested in the kinds and capabilities the two countries have built. Although on paper it has a well-rounded mix of assets (see Table 2), the Soviet navy is still predominantly a submarine force (a traditional sea denial capability). Its surface fleet, lacking organic air support, depends heavily on land-based aircraft for air cover. At the same time, Soviet land-based naval aviation (SNA), primarily *Backfire* and *Badger*-type bombers, possesses significant offensive capability (another sea denial asset). In conditions of major crisis and war, the Soviet surface fleet is not expected to venture far from this air cover in the early going. In a widely shared assessment:

Until conditions are favorable, in a major war, Soviet surface combatants would undoubtedly operate defensively in sea areas contiguous to the homeland where they could receive adequate antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and antiair warfare (AAW) air support. Present Soviet aircraft carriers can neither sustain a power projection role in a high-level conflict, nor is a

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<sup>18</sup>Although the basic distinction—that the U.S. Navy has a *sea control* mission whereas the Soviet Navy has a *sea denial* mission—holds true, advances in military surveillance, intelligence, and weaponry have blurred some of its edges. A useful discussion of the point is A. G. Johnston, "Sea Power and Emerging Naval Systems," paper presented at the International Conference on Ocean Affairs, "The Pacific Naval Balance and Prospects for Naval Arms Control in the 1990s," Seoul, Korea, July 19–20, 1990, pp. 2–4.

comprehensive carrier battle group force likely to evolve in the next decade.<sup>19</sup>

Table 2  
SELECTED ELEMENTS: U.S. AND SOVIET NAVAL FORCES, 1990<sup>a</sup>

	United States	Soviet Union
<b>SHIPS</b>		
Tactical Submarines	96	280
Carriers	14	4
Battleships	4	—
Cruisers	41	37
Destroyers	68	52
Frigates	102	171
Patrol/Coastal Combatants	30	400
Mine Warfare	29	374
Amphibious	66	76
Support/Miscellaneous	152	140
<b>AVIATION</b>		
Organic (embarked)		
Fixed-Wing	1,020 <sup>b</sup>	52
Helicopter	226	164
Land-Based		
Fixed-Wing	904	866
Helicopter	47	120

SOURCE: IISS (1989), pp. 18–20, 35–37, 236–237.

<sup>a</sup>Source should be consulted for qualifications and explanations of table entries.

<sup>b</sup>Does not include U.S. Marine Corps V/STOL aircraft.

The U.S. Navy, by comparison, has been built around a richly diversified mix of assets: in early 1990, 14 carrier battle groups (CVBGs), 4 battleship battle groups (BBBGs) centered upon previously mothballed battleships, approximately 100-plus ASW destroyers and AAW guided missile cruisers, 100 frigates, nearly 100 nuclear-powered attack submarines, plus under way replenishment (UNREP), mine and countermine warfare, and amphibious ships. The U.S. Navy's strike aircraft are deployed at sea; its land-based aviation is primarily an ASW force. Its strategic orientation is sea control and forward power projection. In the event of war between the great powers, conventionally armed U.S. naval forces—particularly carriers and warships equipped with SLCMs—are

<sup>19</sup>Commander D. Conley, HMN, "Soviet Maritime Strategy," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, September 1989, p. 48.

planned to attack Soviet military assets, including naval and other military bases and infrastructure on Soviet territory.<sup>20</sup>

Not surprisingly, there are differences in how the two navies train. As a predominantly sea denial force, the Soviet navy traditionally has had less need to exercise its surface fleet far from home waters. The U.S. Navy, by contrast, has historically depended upon far forward and mid-ocean exercises as key elements in its operational readiness.

### **NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT SEA**

The world of navies is defined in another "reducing" respect as well. Five of the world's navies are nuclear-weapon-capable, both strategically and nonstrategically. Since the early 1960s, the oceans have been the most reliable base for secure, second-strike retaliatory strategic nuclear forces. Within the oceans, the platform of choice is the dedicated strategic ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). Yet, "at sea there is no sharp line between conventional and nuclear weapons. All ships and submarines are potential carriers of tactical nuclear weapons[,] and there is no sharp line between these and strategic nuclear weapons."<sup>21</sup> As the seas provide a place for retaliatory forces to hide, they also provide a medium for attacking these strategic systems with nonstrategic nuclear and conventional systems (that is, through strategic ASW).

The major nuclear powers position their sea-based strategic retaliatory forces differently. The Soviet Union, France, and China essentially "bastion" their SSBNs in heavily protected sea areas close to home. A major mission of their general-purpose naval forces is to defend these bastions. The United States and Britain, on the other hand, rely on global dispersion and long and irregular out-of-area SSBN deployments to protect these assets from detection and possible attack. For the Soviet Union, a key strategic concern is that conventionally armed U.S. naval forces (air, submarine, and surface) will

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<sup>20</sup>Not taken up here is the nearly decade-old debate about the U.S. Navy's self-proclaimed "Maritime Strategy"—how far it reaches, what it includes, and what it means. For different perspectives over time, see Admiral James D. Watkins, USN, "The Maritime Strategy," Supplement to *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 1986; Captain Linton F. Brooks, USN, "Naval Power and National Security," *International Security*, Fall 1986; John J. Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep," *International Security*, Fall 1986; Admiral James A. Lyons, Jr., USN, "A Peacetime Strategy for the Pacific," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1987; and Ronald O'Rourke, "The Maritime Strategy and the Next Decade," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1988.

<sup>21</sup>Foundation for International Security, *Moscow Conversations on the Limitations of Naval Activities and Confidence Building Measures at Sea*, The Rookery, Oxfordshire, UK, March 1989, p. 1 (quoting a Soviet presentation on the subject).

move against and neutralize bastioned Soviet retaliatory systems in the early stages of general conflict. For the United States, fueling the Soviet concern is not without tactical and strategic significance. Threatening bastioned Soviet strategic forces has the (potentially) salutary effect of bottling up much of the Soviet general-purpose navy (especially its attack submarine arm) in a close-in defensive posture, ensuring, in turn, fewer Soviet naval units breaking through choke-points to pose offensive threats to U.S./NATO open-ocean supply and reinforcement.

The five nuclear navies have also developed extensive nonstrategic nuclear inventories, though with different emphases (see Table 3). Unlike the separately platformed strategic (SSBN) systems, tactical and theater nuclear weapons typically are interspersed with conventional weaponry on surface ships, attack submarines, and carrier- and land-based naval aircraft. The platforms are dual-purpose; the delivery systems typically are dual-capable. "The navies of the nuclear powers," in George Quester's

Table 3  
NATO/WARSAW PACT MARITIME NUCLEAR DELIVERY MEANS,  
JUNE 1989

	U.S.	USSR	France	UK
<b>Maritime Launchers</b>				
SLBM	608	942	96	64
<b>Nuclear-Armed Ships</b>				
SLCM				
Land Attack (submarine)	45	10	--	--
Land Attack (surface)	19	--	--	--
Anti-ship (submarine)	--	66	--	--
Anti-ship (surface)	--	26	--	--
ASW (air flight)				
SUBROC	16	--	--	--
SS-N-15	--	35	--	--
ASROC	132	--	--	--
SS-N-15/SUW-N-1	--	65	--	--
Torpedos	--	536	--	--
<b>Maritime Aircraft</b>				
Carrier-based strike	1291	--	64	46
Land-based bombers	--	355	--	--
Land-based ASW	488	195	23	95

SOURCE: IISS (1989), pp. 212, 215, 220.

phrase, "have . . . not yet adjusted generally to the idea of dividing themselves into a nuclear-weapons and a conventional-weapons fleet."<sup>22</sup>

### **MARITIME LAW AND NAVAL DIPLOMACY**

Although naval forces are designed for war, they have always been important vehicles for law enforcement (writ large) and crisis management as well. Naval units are often the only enforcement mechanisms for national rights in the sea. Indeed, for many coastal states, protecting national sovereignty in adjoining waters is the only rationale for maintaining naval capabilities.

The United States has traditionally exercised its legal rights at sea both reactively and proactively. In a pattern unchanged since Jefferson's response to nineteenth-century Barbary pirating, U.S. naval forces have been dispatched from time to time to escort and protect U.S.-flagged commercial and fishery vessels threatened with seizure by coastal states making extended claims to national sovereignty over high-seas areas. (The most recent, albeit a distinctive, manifestation was the Kuwaiti reflagging operation in the Persian Gulf in 1987. In that case it was not a jurisdictional claim, but the seeding of the Gulf with mines that led to the U.S. naval escort.) U.S. policy also has been historically proactive about standing rights of naval presence and innocent passage under international law. Beginning in 1979 (though in practice for decades before), the U.S. Navy has been regularly employed in the exercise of a U.S. Freedom of Navigation Program—routinely challenging excessive maritime claims by coastal states (including claims by U.S. allies) by sending U.S. warships to exercise rights of presence and transit in disputed waters.

Political interventions involving naval forces have tended also to be both responsive and proactive. Reactively, naval forces can be amassed in distant regions to display political interest and resolve, reassure allies, and project power if needed, but they can also accomplish several of these purposes prophylactically by establishing over time a routine presence in or regular deployments to areas of political and strategical interest. Cromwell's dictum—that a man-of-war is the best ambassador—is still an old and trusted dogma in the West. In a classic characterization of the multifaceted value of naval forces in peace, crisis, and war, Kenneth Booth listed the distinctive attributes thusly:

*Versatility*, their ability to perform a variety of tasks; *controllability*, their escalatory and de-escalatory potential; *mobility*, their ability to move

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<sup>22</sup>Quester (1987), p. 193.

between regions with relative ease and relative independence; *projection ability*, their efficiency as bulk carriers of manpower and firepower; *access potential*, their ability to reach distant locations . . . ; *symbolism*, arising from the fact that warships are chunks of national sovereignty; and, finally, *endurance*, the staying power of warships which enables them to be adjacent to a problem but removable, but also removed but committable.<sup>23</sup>

But not all navies (in fact, very few) are oriented toward, equipped for, or generally capable of such ambitious national expression. As noted earlier, in the West only the United States and, to a lesser extent, France have maintained a consistent postwar naval presence in distant, away-from-home waters.<sup>24</sup> For the postwar United States, the central event was Truman's dispatch of the battleship *Missouri* to the Mediterranean in 1946 as a signal of interest in Soviet intrigues in Greece and Turkey. Within two years, a permanent U.S. Sixth Fleet was operating in the area; a permanent Seventh Fleet in the Pacific followed shortly thereafter. Since the late 1940s, the United States has maintained a regular naval presence in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Atlantic, and Pacific, as well as a capability to rapidly increase its presence in and deployments to these and other areas in times of conflict and crisis. Indeed, throughout the postwar period, the U.S. Navy has been the dominant instrument of choice for signalling American interest in and resolve about developments around the globe.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Soviet navy has been numerically large for much longer, the Soviet Union's development of long-range naval capabilities has been comparatively more recent.<sup>26</sup> The Soviet navy first appeared in force outside its home waters during the 1964 Cyprus crisis. Its out-of-area ship days increased markedly beginning in the mid-1960s. The Soviet Union established a regular naval presence (the Fifth *Eskrada* or squadron) in the Mediterranean as early as the late 1950s; it expanded upon this presence through the 1960s and 1970s (its average routine presence in the Mediterranean remains at about 35 ships of all types); it established a more or less permanent presence in the Indian Ocean in

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<sup>23</sup>Kenneth Booth, *Law, Force and Diplomacy*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1982, p. 187 [emphasis in original].

<sup>24</sup>In recent years, Italy and Spain have also developed modest but not unimportant power projection capabilities for non-Soviet contingencies in the Mediterranean. Lacy (1990c).

<sup>25</sup>By one recent account, the U.S. Navy was dispatched to a total of 187 crises and conflicts between 1946 and mid-1989, responding with aircraft carriers in 125 of them. Adam B. Siegel, *Response Activity, 1946-1989: Preliminary Report*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, November 1989, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>The history is richly recounted in the early chapters of Dismukes and McConnell (1979).



the early 1970s; and it increased both the size and visibility of its presence in the Pacific Ocean through the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

#### **NAVAL POWER AND NAVAL LIMITATIONS**

Although the foregoing may seem to merely showcase the obvious, its relevance to specific kinds of naval confidence-building should become more apparent in subsequent sections. In the case of Soviet proposals in particular, the measures advanced focus almost entirely on dimensions of U.S. naval power that are troubling, militarily or politically, to the Soviet Union and are virtually silent on aspects where the Soviet navy is especially capable.

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<sup>27</sup>Notably, Soviet naval out-of-area presence seems to have peaked around 1984 and to be in general decline in the years since then—points we return to in Sec. VI. See, e.g., Floyd D. Kennedy Jr. et al., *Trends in Force Levels and Dispositions of Major Navies Since World War II*, Center for Naval Analyses, Report No. 145, Alexandria, Virginia, June 1989.

### III. PATTERNS AND AMBIGUITIES IN NAVAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

Confidence-building measures can be agreed in many forms. In the naval context, they can be political and/or military. They can be global, regional or subregional, and they can be negotiated multilaterally or bilaterally or even adopted as unilateral initiatives.

— United Nations, *The Naval Arms Race*, 1986<sup>1</sup>

Confidence-building is a form of naval arms control, although, as the quotation above suggests, one that is somewhat formless at the edges. What naval confidence-building means—where it begins and leaves off, how it relates to other forms of arms control and other regulations of the use of the seas, and what “naval” means in this context—is not well established. The general pattern is more a mosaic than a tightly woven fabric—irregularly cut and loosely fitted ideas which, while often comprehensible in their own immediate terms, are difficult to relate to one another or to fit within a larger framework. Proponents of naval confidence-building measures tend to view them as a series of answers, but are often silent or imprecise about the nature, extent, and significance of the specific problems to which these answers are addressed. Although confidence-building is often expressed in regional terms, why this is so, and whether it is realistic given the highly mobile military assets involved, is not self-evident.

While there are naval precedents for much that is proposed in this area, the nomenclature (as well as some of the concepts) is borrowed. The term “confidence-building measure” (CBM) apparently was first coined in a 1955 UN resolution. The grander, but evidently no different, “confidence- and security-building measure” (CSBM) was a Yugoslav innovation in 1981. Both terms (the two are used interchangeably in these pages) were originally used with ground forces, primarily in Europe, in mind. Neither term evokes a very precise vision of purposes served or means to advance them.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 characterized confidence-building measures as steps directly contributing to “eliminating the causes of tension.” In a similar vein, a United Nations *Comprehensive Study on Confidence-building Measures* in the early 1980s suggested that “the overall objective of confidence-building measures is to contribute towards reducing or, in some instances, even eliminating the causes for mistrust, fear, tensions, and hostilities as significant factors behind the international arms

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<sup>1</sup>UN (1986), p. 75.

build-up.”<sup>2</sup> Slightly less ambitiously, the U.S. State Department has referred to CBMs as measures intended to “increase openness, mutual understanding, and communication,” in order “to reduce the possibility of conflict through accident, miscalculation, or failure of communication, and to inhibit opportunities for surprise attack or political intimidation, thereby increasing stability in time of calm as well as crisis.”<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Alford called them simply “measures that tend to make military intentions explicit.”<sup>4</sup>

Naval confidence-building is about navies, the seas, and arms control. Depending upon the formulation, however, it may also be about other types of military forces and activities, nonmilitary maritime assets with military application or potential, adjoining land areas and superjacent airspace, and other forms of regulation of the uses of the sea. The reach may extend to forces based at sea, only to certain of these forces or some of their activities, to all forces (land, sea, and air) in a given maritime area or theater, to some theaters but not others, or globally without regard to regional idiosyncrasies. It may be limited to assets that have a singular and unmistakable military function (warships) or extended to other maritime assets (fishing, oceanographic, and commercial vessels with intelligence potential, for example) that may contribute to overall military capability.

The forms such measures might take, and who should be a party to them, admit a diversity of possibilities. Although a predilection for formal arrangements is evident in most propositions, there is no obvious or compelling reason for reducing much that is proposed to formal agreements. In an observation returned to subsequently:

States can build confidence with potential adversaries not simply by what they do but also by what they elect not to do. Any state has the option of avoiding the appearance (or reality) of being provocative. Equally, any state must be aware that shows of force through the staging of exercises and deployments at certain times and locations can and will be perceived as provocative or threatening and will thus have the effect of eroding confidence.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, while naval confidence-building is not normally associated with the “law of the sea,” the lines separating the two tend to blur. The “law of the sea,” as

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<sup>2</sup>UN Publication No. E.82.IX.3, 1982, para. 160.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of State, *Gist*, January 1985; cited in North Atlantic Assembly (NAA), Political Committee, *Special Report on Confidence-Building Measures: Next Steps for Stability and Security*, International Secretariat, Brussels, November 1988, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Alford, “The Usefulness and the Limitations of CBMs,” in William Epstein and Bernard T. Feld (eds.), *New Directions in Disarmament*, Praeger, New York, 1981, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Haass, “Confidence-Building Measures and Naval Arms Control,” in Jonathan Alford (ed.), *Confidence-Building Measures*, IISS, Adelphi Paper No. 194, London, Spring 1979, p. 27.

codified in the 1958 Geneva Conventions and subsequently reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), constitutes a form of *de facto* naval limitation, albeit in patchwork fashion, by imposing constraints that apply generally to traffic at sea. By the same token, some confidence-building propositions have (or have the potential for having) powerful implications for the general legal regime of the seas. Where navies can and cannot go is not easily separated from broader questions about freedom of navigation.

### TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

Naval confidence-building is a form of naval arms control. That much is clear (or, at least, it is seldom disputed). Though the postwar record of naval arms control agreements is relatively small, the area is not lacking in precedent. The period prior to World War II, and particularly the interwar years, was a time of considerable (and considerably ambitious) experimentation.<sup>6</sup>

Nations entered into naval agreements for various reasons: to preserve a strategic advantage, check an adversary's present or potential advantage, reduce risks of surprise attack by infusing greater "transparency" and predictability into naval operations, promote goodwill among the parties concerned and among third parties, pre-empt possibilities of arms races at sea, reduce the costs of security and/or placate domestic pressures in this direction, and, in certain cases, impose some externally arranged discipline on the uses of naval forces in peacetime.

For most of the prewar period, two general approaches dominated:

- *Structural arrangements* sought to affect the naval order of battle by placing quantitative or qualitative restrictions on the size and composition of naval inventories (that is, on the numbers, sizes, and technical capabilities of naval platforms, weapons, systems, and units).
- *Operational measures*, on the other hand, were aimed primarily at regulating what naval forces could do, and when and where they could do it, through provisions governing naval presence, transits, exercises, maneuvers, and

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<sup>6</sup>The pre- and post-World War II experience is explored at length in a companion Note: Lacy, *Naval Arms Control: The Backdrop of History*, RAND, N-3120-USDP, August 1990 (1990a). Other, though less recent, general historical accounts are Barry M. Blechman, *The Control of Naval Armaments: Prospects and Possibilities*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1975, and UN (1986).

other activities in certain sea areas or within specified distances of coastlines.<sup>7</sup>

Each of these can be subdivided, in turn, into mechanisms that sought to prohibit certain activities (such as increases in numbers and types of naval weapons and platforms, or naval exercises in certain places), so long as the arrangements were in effect, and those that merely required advance notification to other parties before actions could be taken.

Best known of the prohibitive *structural* arrangements are the Washington and London naval conferences of 1922 and 1930, respectively, and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1936. In these, the major naval powers agreed to explicit limitations on the numbers, displacement tonnage, and main gun battery calibers of various classes of ships for fixed, renewable periods, and they also agreed to limits on construction and replacement schedules during these periods. Other structural arrangements were less restrictive. In bilateral protocols between Argentina and Chile in 1902, Greece and Turkey in 1930, and Turkey and the Soviet Union in 1931, the parties pledged merely not to build, replace, or substantially modernize their naval forces without giving the other six months' advance notice so that, in the words of the Greece-Turkey agreement, "both Governments may thus be enabled if necessary to prevent any competition in the sphere of naval armaments by means of a friendly exchange of views and explanations on either side."<sup>8</sup>

Efforts to curtail naval *operations* took several forms. One (to use the awkward phrase of the time) was "denavalization"—essentially the denuding of certain areas of all naval presence and naval (and other) military fortifications. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1856, the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, the Treaty of Buenos Aires in 1881, the Paris Treaty of Spitzbergen in 1920, and the Aaland Islands Convention of 1921 closed various waterways to "the ships of war of all nations" and prohibited the establishment of naval bases and adjoining land fortifications in the areas covered. Less sweeping were arrangements that did not bar naval presence or activity entirely, but sought instead to establish limits on it and rules governing transits, deployments, and operations in specified waters. Perhaps the best known (certainly the most durable) of these are the

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<sup>7</sup>For discussions of structural and operational forms of arms control in other contexts, see Marilee F. Lawrence, *A Game Worth the Candle: The Confidence and Security Building Process in Europe—An Analysis of U.S. and Soviet Negotiating Strategies*, RAND, R-7264-RGS, 1987; and Paul K. Davis, *Toward a Conceptual Framework for Operational Arms Control in Europe's Central Region*, RAND, R-3704-USDP, 1988.

<sup>8</sup>Haass (1979), p. 25.

Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 (naval limitations on the American Great Lakes) and the Montreux Convention of 1936 (limitations on the aggregate tonnage of nonlittoral naval units in the Black Sea at any given time and requirements for advance notice of naval transits through the Turkish Straits). Straddling a middle ground, and of more recent vintage, have been bilateral INCSEA agreements imposing navigational "rules of the road" and prohibitions of dangerous and harassing actions when naval forces of the parties concerned are operating in proximity to each other.

Participation in these arrangements varied. Some agreements were strictly bilateral (between naval powers or between neighboring states); others were multilateral but largely confined to possessors of significant naval forces; still others have come about through conferences and conventions involving all "interested parties."<sup>9</sup> Most agreements were expressed in terms of a fixed period of time, to be revisited or renewed by the parties at designated intervals. Some, long since technically expired without formal renewal, are still generally complied with in practice.<sup>10</sup> A few were explicit about "escape clauses," means for verification of compliance and measures that might be taken in the face of circumvention by other parties. Most, like the Anglo-German agreement in 1936, however, were silent or obscure on such matters, depending primarily on the good faith of the governments concerned (which, in the Anglo-German case, was a source of little assurance from the outset).

## NONSTRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVES

Although there is no obvious reason for the distinction, naval confidence-building is not normally associated with structural arrangements; that is, it is not thought to encompass limitations on or reductions in naval inventories *per se*. The common denominator (or, at least, the commonly accepted denominator) is that confidence-building measures do not immediately or directly affect the size, structure, composition, or ultimate military capability of naval forces, but speak instead to the what, why, when, and where of their operations.

Still, there is more to the subject (and to current proposals) than strictly operational forms of naval arms control. Naval CSBMs can be roughly divided into measures

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<sup>9</sup>The Washington Conference of 1921-22, for example, was limited to the principal naval players of the time—Britain, Japan, the United States, France, Italy, China, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal. The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, on general (including naval) disarmament and the conduct of naval warfare, by contrast, included, respectively, 26 and 44 nations.

<sup>10</sup> The Montreux Convention is a prominent example of an older but still generally complied-with arrangement.

intended to enhance confidence by promoting the exchange of information and those that seek to do so by affecting naval activities directly. *Informational measures* may, in turn, be divided into exchanges of information on standing or static presence, such as inventory levels, naval doctrines, and details about naval bases and support facilities, on the one hand, and exchanges of information on dynamic activities, such as advance notifications and observations of naval exercises, deployments, and maneuvers, on the other.<sup>11</sup>

*Activity constraints* can be divided into measures that seek to prohibit certain kinds of naval presence, assets, or activities entirely (such as bans on naval exercises above a certain size and composition and prohibitions of nuclear weapons in certain waters) and measures that tend more to regulate than to prohibit ("rules of the road" for ships operating in proximity to each other, limitations on the frequency, location, and duration of exercises and maneuvers, and partial limitations of naval presence in designated water areas). Activity restraints may also be divided into measures defined in specific regional or subregional terms and measures expected to take effect on the high seas without regard to regional considerations.

While controls on naval structures are not the object, naval inventories still tend to be relevant in three ways. First, activity constraints that fall short of total naval disengagement are commonly expressed in combinations that involve inventory (numbers and specific types of naval weapons and platforms to be affected) as well as geography (designated sea areas or distances from coastlines) and mission (the purpose of the activity to be limited or regulated).

Second, though confidence-building-type measures commonly are advanced in their own terms, they are also often thought to be either needed complements to or steps leading toward structural measures. The proposition, alternatively, is that structural measures are unsatisfactory or incomplete unless accompanied by CSBMs to "clarify warning, extend warning time, unmask attempts at deception, make military intentions more explicit, and reduce the impact of military preparations on the pace of a crisis,"<sup>12</sup> or that CSBMs are an inadequate substitute for structural measures and merely provide a helpful climate—"they assist and support disarmament initiatives and they can create an atmosphere conducive to progress, but they are not a replacement for real disarmament actions."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The distinction and the terminology are borrowed from Haass (1979), pp. 24-27.

<sup>12</sup>NAA, Political Committee (1988), p. iv.

<sup>13</sup>UN (1986), p. 75.

Third, the line between keeping away certain kinds of naval forces (through regional arrangements) and eliminating them entirely can be shadowy in particular cases. The long-term practical effects of confidence-building propositions that would bar specific weapons (e.g., SLCMs) or functions (e.g., ASW) from large ocean areas or within range distances from targets may not be greatly dissimilar from measures that would directly cut into inventories in these areas. Deprived of targets and functions (and thus a compelling rationale), the affected naval assets may wither away over time.

### **PARTIES IN INTEREST**

Who is a relevant party depends in no small part on which interest is being emphasized. The major powers can be thought to have two kinds of interest in naval CSBMs. The first is security in a traditional sense. Only at sea do the military forces of the major powers regularly interact within firing range of each other. The power projection ranges of naval platforms and delivery systems make them potential first-strike capabilities. Forcing such systems out of range, better understanding the intentions and naval capabilities of the other party, having means to communicate explanations of naval movements in times of crisis, and putting in place arrangements to reduce the risks of inadvertent naval incidents and misinterpretation of those incidents—all these can be said to enhance national security goals.

But confidence-building can also serve political goals in peacetime by reducing or otherwise hamstringing an adversary's flexibility to use naval force as an instrument of national policy. Restricting naval presence in certain waters may enhance the security of one or both of the major powers and their immediate allies, but it can also have the effect (intended or unintended) of limiting the political leverage of one or both powers over regional disputes involving other parties. The distinction seems obvious, but it is often difficult to locate within confidence-building propositions. The same provision requiring advance notification of major naval exercises and maneuvers may serve a useful security purpose, for example, but it may also interfere with flexible use of naval forces in regional contests and disputes involving third parties.

Third-party interest, at the same time, may be animated by a number of considerations: skittishness on the part of nonnuclear states about nuclear ordnance on foreign ships and aircraft in nearby waters and airspace, general concerns about major power naval competition in local waters, nationalistic distress about nonlittoral naval forces operating off national coasts under neither littoral sovereignty nor international regulation, interest on the part of coastal states to expand their full jurisdiction over



adjoining (but not recognized as territorial) waters, and desires by states potentially on the receiving end of coercive naval diplomacy to restrict flag country capabilities.

### DEFINING "NAVAL"

What "naval" means (or should mean) in this context is not always self-evident. The discernible tendency is to focus on naval forces that are visible and (relatively) measurable. This places a premium on surface naval forces, often to the general slight of land-based naval assets and mine and submarine capabilities. Yet, as noted in Sec. II, the period when naval power could be equated with the number of ships amassed in a given sea area, without reference to military assets on land, has long since passed. Argentina's use of the sea-skimming *Exocet* missile against the British armada in the Falklands in 1982, Syria's shootdown of U.S. carrier-launched strike aircraft over Lebanon in 1984, and Iraq's single-aircraft attack on the USS *Stark* in 1988 are scattered illustrations of a larger reality: "nonnaval" states have developed or acquired often potent capabilities to project power onto the seas and defend against power projected from the sea. The other reality is the general asymmetry in force compositions of the U.S. and Soviet navies. To constrain the readiness and movements of a U.S. carrier battle group but not a land-based squadron of Soviet *Backfire* bombers targeted against it, for example, would make no strategic sense from a U.S. perspective, any more than would constraints on offshore naval guns but not on coastal batteries.

What to include and how to include it, then, are more than technical questions. As Richard Haass has usefully summarized:

Does one simply count the numbers of vessels in naval inventories, or does one consider as well the availability in a given part of the world of non-naval or non-sea-based forces and systems . . . ? Is the aim . . . to be the limiting of naval forces *per se*, the control of all forces acting within a given maritime theater, or the contribution made by naval and other sea-based forces to a larger theater?<sup>14</sup>

Yet, to move beyond relatively measurable and detectable surface units at sea to better account for overall strategic balances (regionally or globally) is invariably to encounter a definitional maze and a verification nightmare.

No measurement standard—numbers, ship-days, tonnage, staying power, armament—is capable of providing either singly or in combination with others, a full and accurate reflection of capability. This problem is further exacerbated by asymmetries between the American and Soviet fleets at

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<sup>14</sup>Haass (1979), p. 24.

three levels: individual units of account, fleet totals and missions. To these and other problems can be added that of the definition of the role of particular ships (is the *Kiev* an antisubmarine cruiser or small carrier?), the difficulty of verifying the presence of submarines, the problem of verifying armament, the establishment of limits for the use and scope of facilities, and the growing overlap between sea-based forces and strategic arms.<sup>15</sup>

## REGIONAL VERSUS GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS

Yet if it is strategically myopic to consider naval limitations without regard for overall regional military balances, thinking of naval confidence-building in regional terms presents its own set of difficulties. First, there is the risk of (certainly the difficulty in avoiding) capturing within regional arrangements naval assets and capabilities that perform missions unrelated to regional military balances. It is true that certain naval platforms perform only or mostly certain kinds of functions (e.g., minesweepers), but it is often the case that the same naval platform (an aircraft carrier, for example) will be used to fight other ships at sea, detect and destroy submarines, attack targets on land, and provide defenses for forces on land.

Second, regional military balances are not the same as regional political balances. This, too, is obvious as a general proposition, but not always easy to measure in particular cases.

Enjoying freedom of navigation on the high seas [naval forces] cast political shadows before them, particularly onto the shores of the littoral states. However, since the dependence of nations on supplies by sea varies considerably, symmetric limitations on access to particular oceans areas could have asymmetrical political effects.<sup>16</sup>

In Haass's pointed phrase, "To constrain naval forces in the name of building confidence begs a key question: confidence on whose part?"<sup>17</sup> For a Libya, Cuba, or Iran, for example, the offshore appearance of U.S. naval forces would not be a warmly greeted turn of events; for a Saudi Arabia or Israel, a U.S. naval presence just over the horizon in a crisis might be precisely the manifestation of U.S. interest and resolve most sought.

Third, a point revisited momentarily, regional arrangements involving naval forces may be more unbalancing than balancing. Precisely because the larger blue-water navies

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Johan Jorgen Holst, Norwegian Minister of Defense, "The Arctic, Northern Waters and Arms Control," Address to the Third Oslo International Symposium, Oslo, Norway, June 18, 1989, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>Haass (1979), p. 28.

embody essentially mobile military capabilities, "regional naval limitation regimes are likely to prove unstable as they would be inherently vulnerable to disruption by naval forces from outside the region."<sup>18</sup> At times of acute crisis—when observing the niceties of preexisting arrangements presumably will not be the priority interest—naval forces can be reinserted in areas from which they have once been removed normally quicker and in quicker mass than ground forces and land-based air forces.

These considerations have led some to propose that naval confidence-building be organized and arranged only in global terms.<sup>19</sup> This, however, tends to limit sharply the universe of possibilities. Beyond INCSEA- and "hotline"-type arrangements, which traditionally are not region-specific, it becomes difficult to imagine what fits the bill. Moreover, global naval confidence-building does not come without risks of strategic imbalances of its own—it might just as easily tilt strategic balances in favor of regional naval powers (which have limited sea areas to defend) against the global powers (which have one or more oceans to be concerned with).<sup>20</sup>

## PEACE AND WAR

"Confidence," of course, is an elusive concept, as are attempts to link confidence with security. Confidence can impart a false as well as an accurate sense of security, whereas security may in some circumstances be better enhanced by the lack of confidence in an adversary's intentions and designs.<sup>21</sup> How naval confidence-building in peacetime affects the character and content of war is uncertain. Presumably, the readiness of naval forces that exercise less frequently, or that are less familiar with certain sea areas, is somewhat eroded. This, in turn, may be good from the perspective of potential adversaries. Yet it is in the nature of naval power that forces withdrawn from certain areas in peacetime can return to those areas in times of crisis and conflict with much greater speed and flexibility than other types of military forces. The seas do not change that much over time.

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<sup>18</sup>Holst (1989), p. 5.

<sup>19</sup>This is essentially the argument of Holst (1989).

<sup>20</sup>This was certainly among the lessons of the major power naval treaties of the 1920s and 1930s, which tended to favor the regional navies, Japan and Germany, over the global forces, Britain and the United States. See, generally, Lacy (1990a).

<sup>21</sup>Britain in the late 1930s, for example, was supremely confident about its appeasement policy toward Hitler, confident that German naval rearmament could be controlled by negotiation, and confident that, intelligence information notwithstanding, the Reich was in general compliance with the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

Moreover, while confidence-building arrangements may make surprise attacks from the sea less immediately surprising, the effects are likely to be very transitory. Structural agreements that cut deeply into naval inventories are not easily, quickly, or covertly reversed in times of acute crisis. Arrangements that do no more than regulate naval activities in peacetime, on the other hand, are almost bound to be among the first victims of open warfare. The submarine, carrier, and SLCM-bearing warship held to a certain distance from an adversary's coastline in peacetime is not likely to honor the line once fighting begins.

### THE LAW AND POLITICS OF THE SEA

As the quotation introducing this section suggests, how confidence-building arrangements are made admits a wide range of possibilities. Yet differences between tacit understandings and legally binding agreements, between bilateral arrangements and multilateral conventions, and between periodically renewable and more or less permanent arrangements are not insignificant in terms of the wider context of maritime law. Overlaps between arms control agreements to constrain naval activities and the general law of the sea are indeterminate, but they can be broadly visualized along two lines. First, some past arms control treaties directly affect the law of the sea. The Montreux Convention's limitations on transit through the Turkish Straits have become a permanent part of the law of the sea. Other treaties—the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Sea-Bed Treaty (1971), the Treaty of Tlateloco establishing a NWFZ in Latin America, and the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga creating a South Pacific NWFZ—have had similar impacts.<sup>22</sup>

By the same token, the law of the sea provides a limited kind of *de facto* arms control, albeit "not specifically intended or designed as such."<sup>23</sup> The principal codification, adjustment, and refinement in recent years has been UNCLOS. While the United States has not signed, acceded to, or ratified UNCLOS, the U.S. government generally considers the convention to be reflective of customary international law and has pledged to recognize nondeep seabed mining provisions of the rights of other states in the waters off their coasts, as reflected in the convention, so long as the rights and freedoms of the United States and others under international law are recognized by such coastal

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<sup>22</sup>For the details of these agreements, see, generally, Lacy (1990a).

<sup>23</sup>Booth (1982), p. 183. Of the 320 UNCLOS articles (main text only), thirteen deal with military activities at sea in general and warships in particular.

states.<sup>24</sup> (This was reaffirmed in September 1989, when U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze signed a joint statement stating each government's position that UNCLOS provisions, with respect to traditional uses of the ocean, generally constitute international law and practice and balance fairly the interests of all states.)

UNCLOS both expresses and establishes limits on a postwar tendency of coastal states to extend their sovereignty and jurisdiction over adjacent maritime areas. Its provisions reflect a compromise between the arguments of traditional maritime nations to limit national sovereignty to the three-mile mark and to a narrow definition of underseas rights to the sea-bed and continental shelf, on the one hand, and the aspirations of a number of coastal states to extend their exclusive jurisdiction as far out from coastlines as 200 miles, on the other. UNCLOS empowers coastal states to exercise sovereignty over a "territorial sea" up to a distance of 12 miles, its sea-bed, subsoil, and superjacent airspace; it establishes the concept of an "exclusive economic zone" (EEZ) of up to 200 nautical miles in which coastal states have sovereign rights with respect to the natural resources, living and nonliving, of the waters superjacent to the sea-bed and of the sea-bed and its subsoil and with regard to other economic activities for the exploration and exploitation of the zone; it recognizes the sovereign rights of coastal states for the purpose of exploring and exploiting the natural resources of the adjoining continental shelf; and it establishes a concept of an "archipelagic state," which may under certain conditions exercise sovereignty over what are known as "archipelagic waters."

UNCLOS is relevant to naval confidence-building in the first instance precisely because it embodies rules governing what, when in territorial waters, warships may do under general provisions of innocent passage.<sup>25</sup> But UNCLOS and the broader politics of

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<sup>24</sup>President Ronald Reagan, May 1983, quoted in *Arms Control Today*, May 1988, p. 15. UNCLOS was signed in December 1982. By June 1990 it had 43 ratifications out of 60 required. The treaty is to come into force twelve months from the time the 60th ratification is received by the UN. It should be noted that the Soviet Union also has not yet ratified the convention.

<sup>25</sup>UNCLOS preserves traditional principles that a warship operating in international waters is immune from the jurisdiction of any state other than the flag state. UNCLOS also provides for innocent passage of warships in the territorial waters of other states, but "specifies" activities that are not deemed "innocent" for these purposes. Among these are "any exercise or practice with weapons of any kind," "any act aimed at collecting information to the prejudice or security of the coastal state," and "the launching, landing or taking on board of any aircraft" or "any military device." Article 19. Attached to the Baker/Shevardnadze joint statement of September 1989, the United States and the Soviet Union issued the *Uniform Interpretation of the Rules of International Law Governing Innocent Passage*, which, among other things, expressed their shared "understanding" that the relevant rules governing innocent passage are embodied in UNCLOS.

the law of the sea are relevant in a wider, longer-term sense as well. Although the UNCLOS charter is relatively specific about where coastal jurisdiction of territorial seas leaves off and the rights of other nations' freedom of navigation begin, there remains what Kenneth Booth has called the phenomenon of "creeping jurisdiction": a tendency on the part of a number of coastal states to closely identify their security interests beyond the present 12-mile limit to the broader 200-mile EEZ area.<sup>26</sup>

### THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Against this backdrop, Europe presents a distinctive case on several counts. First, whereas elsewhere the challenge is how to take account of military capabilities on land when thinking through confidence-building at sea, in Europe the principal challenge (certainly the principal argument) is to find a way to extend agreements already reached (or currently under negotiation) on land to naval forces operating in adjoining seas. In a view not limited to Moscow, the CDE's current and projected CSBM regime is strategically unbalanced unless the same kinds of provisions applicable to ground and air forces can be imposed on naval forces operating in nearby waters. Indeed, much of what the Soviet Union has proposed in the naval sphere in the CDE talks is directly borrowed from confidence-building provisions the West has already agreed to—and in some cases heavily championed—with regard to other forces. This, however, assumes that a concept applicable to one type of force in one region of the world is easily (or logically) transferrable to a different kind of force whose world of operations includes but does not end with Europe's waters.

Second, "Europe's waters" means different things, strategically and politically, depending on which waters one is thinking about. It is possible to view the interests at stake in the Black, Baltic, North, Greenland, and Norwegian Seas as primarily security-driven in content—or at least dominated by political concerns in a strictly European context. The Mediterranean, however, is both European and decidedly non-European in these terms. It is European because it forms the southern strategic flank of NATO: through which NATO's southern region would be supplied and reinforced in a major war, from which the West might attack the Soviet Union's flanks, and through which, more generally, much of Europe's oil is transported. Yet the Mediterranean is also the meeting

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<sup>26</sup>Booth (1982), p. 186. As of January 1990, 80 nations claim an exclusive 200-mile EEZ, while 13 claim a territorial sea of 200 miles. U.S. State Department, "Limits in the Seas: National Claims to Maritime Jurisdiction," Robert W. Smith (ed.), Office of Ocean Law and Policy, No. 36, 6th Revision, Washington, D.C., January 3, 1990.

point of three continents—Europe, Africa, and Asia—and serves (along with the Red Sea) as an intercontinental inlet providing a major line of communication between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The regional culture of war and political contest, as well as the power balance and interests at stake, has a long and very separate identity. The permanent presence of both the U.S. Sixth Fleet and the Soviet Fifth *Eska*dra is as dedicated to influencing political developments on the non-European Mediterranean littoral as it is to East-West security issues.

Third, European interest in naval limitations divides along lines that are historical and geographical in character. The traditional naval powers, Britain and France, do not normally or naturally warm to constraints on naval activities, nor do the Southern Region members of NATO—Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey—who have interests in the Mediterranean quite apart from NATO-wide concerns for European security. The Scandinavian countries, negligible as sea powers for centuries, their security interests and political concerns defined primarily in terms of European power balances, have traditionally been more receptive to propositions that would limit or regulate naval competition in nearby waters.

The Soviet Union's proposals for confidence-building at sea neither begin nor end in Europe. Seen in the next section, however, the "Vienna connection" forms an important part of Soviet overtures in this area.

#### IV. SOVIET OVERTURES

We have never considered, and do not now consider, that it is an ideal situation when the navies of the great powers are cruising about for long periods far from their own shores, and we are prepared to solve this problem, but to solve it, as they say, on an equal basis. On the basis of such principles, the Soviet Union is ready to discuss any proposal.

— Leonid Brezhnev, 1971<sup>1</sup>

Given the public record since 1986, it would be foolish to mistake Soviet interest in naval confidence-building as half-hearted or frivolous. One need not look far for evidence of a Soviet sense of urgency. "It is inadmissible to leave naval forces outside the framework of negotiations," Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told the UN General Assembly in June 1988. "This is a major global problem, but its resolution can and should be started at regional levels."<sup>2</sup> Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee one year later, Marshal Sergei Akromeyev hinted darkly that progress in conventional force negotiations in Europe could suffer unless the West is more accommodating in the naval sphere. "We regard reaching agreement on starting the talks to reduce our naval forces and limit military activities at seas [sic] to be a major prerequisite for further improvement of Soviet-American relations."<sup>3</sup> At the Malta Summit with President Bush in December 1989, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev proposed specific negotiations to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons from all U.S. and Soviet surface vessels, general naval disengagement in the Mediterranean, and a much larger East-West arms control agenda to take naval forces and naval activities into full account.<sup>4</sup>

The stress on getting on with naval discussions, while scarcely a new departure in Soviet foreign policy, bears the distinctive mark of Gorbachev. Recent Soviet proposals have been more extensive, more persistent, and generally more skillful politically than in earlier periods of Soviet public diplomacy. The proposals themselves, however, have

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<sup>1</sup>*Pravda*, June 12, 1971; reported in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, July 13, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Eduard J. Shevardnadze, Address to the UN General Assembly, Third Special Session on Disarmament, New York, June 8, 1988.

<sup>3</sup>Sergei Akromeyev, "Statement to the U.S. Congress in July 1989 on the USSR stand in the field of national security for the 1990s," July 1989, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>See, e.g., "Excerpts from Bush-Gorbachev News Conference," *Washington Post*, December 4, 1989, p. A22; "Crowe Suggests New Approach on Naval Nuclear Arms Cuts," *Washington Post*, January 8, 1990, p. A1.



been no less kaleidoscopic than in the past—traversing dizzyingly across subject matter, continents, and potential forums for negotiation. Although there are rough patterns and recurring themes, the Soviet Union has yet to clarify what it really wants in this area. Occasionally, as in the proposal tabled in Vienna in March 1989, there are specifics, but for the most part, the Soviet tendency has been to paint in very broad strokes.

Soviet proposals can be categorized in several ways. The broadest distinction is between propositions whose evident goals are primarily political and those whose objectives are more strictly military in content. Proposals may also be distinguished along lines of geographical reach—whether global or regional in thrust, and regionally, by region. They may be distinguished as well according to levels of intervention. Advance notifications of naval exercises, for example, intrude at one level; observers at exercises, at a second; limitations on numbers, size, frequency, and duration of exercises, at a third; and outright prohibitions of exercises in certain sea areas, at still a fourth.

Not surprisingly, there is a political history as well as a current content to what the Soviet Union has in mind. Most of the ideas are not new. Though arguably less consciously propagandistic than in the past, there continues to be a strong element of opportunism in the what, where, and when of the initiatives put forward.

## **POSTWAR PATTERNS**

Proposals for naval disengagement in various ocean areas have been a recurring feature of Soviet diplomacy since the 1950s. In 1957, the Soviet Union proposed to the United States the first in a series of formal negotiations for naval disengagement in the Mediterranean Sea. In 1958, Nikolai Bulganin made the first in an equally long series of proposals to establish a NWFZ in northern Europe, to include the Nordic and Arctic waters. Later proposals dealt with disengagement from the Indian Ocean, parts of the Pacific, and the Baltic Sea. In 1971, Leonid Brezhnev invited the United States to join in a comprehensive mutual limitation on naval deployments throughout the globe—a proposal that was regularly reaffirmed by Soviet spokesmen over the course of the next several years.

In 1973, the Soviet Union introduced at the UN General Assembly a draft resolution calling upon the major naval powers to agree to limits on expenditures for naval forces. In 1974, Brezhnev repeated earlier Soviet proposals for denuclearization in the Mediterranean. In the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-II) in the late 1970s, Soviet negotiators sought to place numerical and range limitations on all SLCMs (with conventional as well as nuclear warheads).

Outside of SALT, Soviet interest seemed to wane in the years following (a period in which, not coincidentally, the global reach of Soviet naval deployments increased markedly), but it re-emerged in the early 1980s in the face of the Reagan administration's program to build to a 600-ship, 15-carrier-battle-group Navy. At the UN Second Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, the Soviet Union made a number of recommendations dealing with naval limitations, including "removal of missile submarines from extensive areas of combat patrol, and confinement of their cruises within agreed limits." In April 1984, Foreign Minister Gromyko wrote to the UN Secretary General that the Soviet Union was ready for multilateral talks on naval disarmament. In May 1985, the Soviet representative told the UN Disarmament Conference (UNDC):

Today, we are witnessing a new round of military naval arms, and here, too, the initiator is the United States . . . banking on acquiring comprehensive military superiority and on the opportunity to use massive force even in those regions that are very distant from the American continent.

The build-up of naval armaments and the involvement of an ever-increasing number of regions of the oceans of the world in the sphere of the activity of military fleets are fraught with dangerous conflicts and further aggravate the international situation. These developments have put the question of curbing the naval arms race on the agenda of world politics.<sup>5</sup>

Though Soviet spokesmen occasionally suggested structural controls on naval forces, confidence-building-type measures (writ large) were the main avenue of approach through most of this period. The principal recurring emphasis was on NWFZs and generalized, "denavalized," zones of peace.

#### **GORBACHEV'S "OFFENSIVE"**

The pace, if not the character, of Soviet initiatives changed with Gorbachev. What the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations characterized in early 1988 as a "Soviet naval arms control offensive" kicked off in early 1986.<sup>6</sup> In May, the Soviet Union carried the subject again to the UN. Echoing Brezhnev 15 years earlier, the USSR tabled an urgent appeal for a "practical search for solutions that would eliminate the situation in which naval fleets of major powers are at sea for long periods of time far from their shores." Specifically, "such steps as withdrawing vessels carrying nuclear weapons from certain ocean and sea areas, establishing limits on the presence in those areas of vessels of

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<sup>5</sup>UNDC, *Verbatim Record of the 93rd Meeting*, A/CN.10/PV.93, May 23, 1985, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>6</sup>Trost (1988), p. 421ff.

various classes, and other ships [sic] could also be taken." As "an urgent measure, agreement could be reached on the non-expansion of naval activities . . . in the areas with the busiest sea lanes or where the probability of conflict situations is highest, be it in the Indian, Atlantic or Pacific Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea or the Persian Gulf."<sup>7</sup>

Between July 1986 and October 1989, the Soviet Union and the WTO made public nearly two dozen major (though often repetitive) initiatives along these lines (see Fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> As in the past, the Gorbachev-era proposals, though expressed in terms of mutual and reciprocal actions, have focused primarily on assets, actions, and geographical locations of U.S. naval forces. As in the past also, the overtures have not been confined to Europe. Indeed, much of what the Soviet Union has ventured since 1986 aims quite specifically at other parts of the world. In terms of area coverage, virtually every body of water around the Eurasian land mass has been the subject of Soviet naval propositions.

As the present round of negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe began to take form in 1988, however, Soviet spokesmen became more explicit about the linkage between naval limitations and European security and between naval negotiations and the conventional force negotiations. "From the standpoint of disarmament," Shevardnadze told the UN in June, "naval forces still remain 'off-limits'"

Some states which are ready to include even kitchen trailers in the military balance on the side of their opponents, become nervous when they are invited just to talk about, for instance, aircraft carriers. And here a question arises on the level of an arithmetic textbook: What is the number of, say, tanks that would be equal to the fire-power of this floating armada?<sup>9</sup>

## THE VIENNA CONNECTION

Against this backdrop, the WTO's tabling of a naval CSBM proposal in CDE in March 1989 was a significant step.<sup>10</sup> Although Gorbachev's naval arms control diplomacy had been vigorous, before March 1989 it was also basically forumless. In earlier rounds of the CDE, the West effectively kept naval subjects off the table under the general theory of "functional link": CSBMs adopted at the Stockholm round of CDE in 1986 spoke to naval activities only to the extent that the activities involved are

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<sup>7</sup>UNDC, "Study on the Naval Arms Race," working paper submitted by Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, and the USSR, A/CN.10/80, May 15, 1986, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>These are discussed at length in Lacy, *The Baroque Debate: Public Diplomacy and Naval Arms Control, 1986-1989*, RAND, N-3121-USDP, August 1990 (1990b).

<sup>9</sup>Shevardnadze (1988).

<sup>10</sup>The East's proposal has 21 provisions: 5 land, 5 air, and 11 naval CSBMs.

May 1986	UNDC	Withdrawing nuclear-weapon vessels from certain (unspecified) areas; presence limits on other vessels: nonexpansion of naval activities in Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans, Mediterranean, Persian Gulf; CSBMs in Mediterranean
July 1986	Vladisvostck	Wide-ranging naval restrictions in Pacific and Indian Oceans.
May 1987	UNDC	Reduction of fleet activities in Pacific.
June 1987	Berlin	Side with force advantage over the other to make reductions; nuclear-free zones in Balkans, northern Europe.
Oct 1987	Murmansk	Scale down naval activity in Baltic, North, Norwegian, Greenland Seas; CSBMs in Arctic.
Jan 1988	Moscow	USSR as guarantor of nuclear-weapon-free zone in Nordic Region; CSBMs.
Feb 1988	Moscow	Naval arms control throughout Arctic Region.
March 1988	Belgrade	Freeze on, subsequent withdrawal of, U.S./USSR warships from Mediterranean.
March 1988	Sofia	Reduce military activities in sea and ocean areas adjacent to Europe; to embody Mediterranean; reciprocal naval reductions in Mediterranean.
April 1988	Sofia	Extension of CDE CSBM regime to independent naval operations.
May 1988	UNDC	Limitations in Pacific and Indian Oceans; multilateral INCSEA.
June 1988	UN	CSBMs; limit on numbers of ships with nuclear weapons; zones of lower naval density; elimination of foreign bases.
June 1988	UNDC	Multilateral INCSEA to include general-purpose submarines.
Sept 1988	Soviet press	ASW-free security areas; reductions in inventories to include submarines.
Sept 1988	Krasnoyarsk	Soviet withdrawal from naval base in Vietnam in exchange for U.S. withdrawal from Philippines.
Oct 1988	Moscow	Freeze on naval build-ups in the Pacific.
Oct. 1988	UNDC	CSBMs.
Jan. 1989	Communique	Naval forces included in WTO's NATO/WTO conventional forces in Europe comparison; extend CDE CSBM regime to naval forces.
Feb 1989	Baghdad	Soviet/U.S. withdrawal of naval forces from Persian Gulf.
Feb. 1989	U.S. report	100 Soviet submarines eliminated in exchange for 5 to 7 U.S. carriers.
March 1989	Vienna	11-point naval CSBM proposal for inclusion in CDE.
July 1989	Washington	Bilateral reductions of U.S./Soviet navies; CFE agreement may not be possible without naval reductions.
Oct 1989	Finland	Remove nuclear-weapon-bearing submarines from Baltic and Northern waters.

Fig. 1—Major Soviet/WTO naval arms control overtures, 1986–1989

functionally related to a notifiable land activity.<sup>11</sup> The predecessor to the parallel CFE conventional force negotiations in Vienna—the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks from 1973 to early 1989—did not cover naval forces, and the negotiating “mandate” for CFE itself states explicitly that “naval forces . . . will not be addressed.”<sup>12</sup>

Outside Vienna, there has been little negotiating activity in the naval sphere. The UNDC has entertained naval arms control proposals in recent years, but the UNDC is traditionally more a venue for public pronouncements than a forum for specific negotiations, and, in any case, the United States has opted to not participate in the UNDC’s naval discussions. Apart from the inclusion of sea-based nuclear systems in the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START) in Geneva and regular navy-to-navy consultations provided by the U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea (INCSEA) Agreement of 1972, no other forum has existed for naval discussions. The last time the United States and the Soviet Union held bilateral discussions about constraints at sea was 1978—a short-lived and uneventful round about limiting naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

For the Soviet Union, then, the March 1989 tabling of a naval proposal in CDE was an important opening—geared to spotlight the issue on a timetable that makes uncomfortable an indefinite deferral by the West.<sup>13</sup> That a naval proposal would be placed on the table in the 1989 round was not unexpected. At the earlier Stockholm round in 1986, the Soviet Union proposed to extend the Stockholm Conference’s CSBMs to “independent” naval and air activities. In the face of Western opposition, Mr. Gorbachev withdrew the proposal but made clear at the time that the East would

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<sup>11</sup>The Stockholm Conference’s CSBMs provide for advance notification to all parties of major military activities in the field at or over 13,000 troops or 300 tanks, observations of such activities by other parties when the activities involve over 17,000 troops, and the limited right of on-site inspection upon demand (each state must accept up to three such inspections per year, but not more than one inspection per year by the same country). The Stockholm agreement covers naval exercises for purposes of advance notification, but only in highly restricted circumstances: when the naval exercises concerned (1) take place in a sea immediately adjoining a covered land area, (2) affect European security, and (3) directly relate to and are a functional part of a notifiable land exercise. “Independent” air and naval exercises, at the West’s insistence, were not included at Stockholm.

<sup>12</sup>The two sets of talks in Vienna, CDE and CFE, are discussed in detail in Lacy (1990c). Briefly, CDE is a 35-nation forum consisting of the United States, Canada, the Soviet Union, and all European countries except Albania, aimed chiefly at regulating the activities of conventional forces in Europe through CSBMs. CFE is limited to the 23 (now 22) members of NATO and the WTO, is an “autonomous negotiation,” and is focused primarily on altering and reducing the size and structure of the two alliances’ conventional forces in Europe, “from the Atlantic to the Urals” (ATTU).

<sup>13</sup>The 11-point naval proposal was sponsored by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary.

introduce something similar in a later round. In the months leading up to March 1989, the WTO signalled unmistakably its intention to place naval CSBMs squarely on the table this time around. Unlike CFE, where the subjects to be addressed (and not addressed) are set forth in a prenegotiation mandate, CDE, as part of the broader and longer "Helsinki process" dating to 1973, is a process with no predetermined termination point. Moreover, an important political clock runs at CDE. The Helsinki process is subject to periodic "entire" reviews by the assembled states. The current CDE round takes place between the third review (November 1986-January 1989) and the fourth (scheduled to begin in March 1992). The closer in time to the March 1992 review, the more difficult it will be for the United States and NATO-Europe to avoid the WTO's naval proposal.

### **VIENNA PROPOSALS**

More detailed than virtually anything else the Soviet Union and the East have advanced to date, the naval points introduced by the WTO at CDE cover four general matters: notifications, observations, prohibitions, and prevention of incidents at sea (see Fig. 2). Specifically, the East's proposal calls for:

- Notification of naval exercises involving over 20 combat ships of more than 1,500 tons each, or over 5 ships with at least one over 5,000 tons and equipped with cruise missiles or aircraft, or over 80 combat aircraft.
- Notification of transfers into or within the zone of naval groups of over 10 ships of more than 1,500 tons each, or over 5 ships of which at least one is over 5,000 tons and equipped with cruise missiles or aircraft.
- Notification of marine force transfers involving over 3,000 men to the territory of another state.
- Notification of transfers to the territory of another state of over 30 naval combat aircraft.
- Observations of exercises involving over 25 combat ships of more than 1,500 tons each or over 100 combat aircraft.
- Limitation of exercises of over 50 combat ships.
- Naval exercises to be limited to 10 to 14 days.
- No more than 6 to 8 naval exercises by each side annually.
- Prohibition of notifiable exercises in zones of intense shipping/fishing or straits of international significance.
- Inclusion of naval activities in annual calendars.

- Conclusion of an agreement on prevention of incidents in sea areas and airspace adjoining Europe.

Prior Notification

- > 20 combat ships/exercise
- > 5 combat ships enter/transit ATTU zone
- > 3000 Marines enter/transit ATTU zone
- > 30 aircraft transfer (to another state)

Observers at:

- > 25 combat ships/exercise
- > 100 combat aircraft/exercise

Limitations/Prohibitions

- > 50 combat ships/exercise
- 10–14 days exercise duration
- 6–8 naval exercises/year
- No naval activity in shipping, fishing, or international straits

Incidents at Sea

- Comprehensive pan-European agreement

Fig. 2—Warsaw Treaty Organization naval CSBM proposal,  
Vienna, March 1989

The WTO's proposal, however, is only one of three on the CDE table. The West's proposal, tabled by Canada in March 1989, does not speak to any of the WTO's proposed points. Consistent with the "functional link" requirement of the Stockholm Conference in 1986, it does not address naval exercises or independent naval activity.<sup>14</sup> The third proposal was tabled by the twelve NNAs in July 1989.<sup>15</sup> It expands upon the Western proposal to include naval forces (including naval forces afloat in the ATTU region), embraces a wider concept of amphibious operations for purposes of notification than did Stockholm, and "encourages" the prior notification of innocent passage by warships through territorial seas (see Fig. 3).

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<sup>14</sup>The West's proposal (WV-1) focuses on land activity in Europe and contains three categories (or "tiers") of confidence-building measures: (1) static information exchanges (troops, structure, weapon systems); (2) notification and observation (out of garrison exercise activities); and (3) contacts and communications (including media access).

<sup>15</sup>The NNAs are (non-aligned) Yugoslavia, Malta, and Cyprus, (neutral) Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, and Monaco, and (other) Ireland, San Marino, and the Vatican.

Information Exchange (Annual):

- Location of main naval bases ATTU
- Number, type, homeport, and armaments of combat ships
- Number and type of ship-based helicopters and aircraft
- Command structure and location
- Force structure modernization

Notification (Amphibious Activities):

- Amphibious "phase briefing"
- Number and type of ships and landing craft
- Ships to provide naval gunfire support
- Number of aircraft sorties by mission
- Number and type of helicopters

Observation (Amphibious):

- Observation of major combat units

Notification (Innocent Passage):

- Prior notification by warships transiting through territorial seas

Fig. 3—Naval CSBM proposal of the NNA, Vienna, July 1989



## V. THE GALAXY OF SOVIET PROPOSITIONS

The Soviet Union has [not] dropped the idea of negotiations about naval forces. Today we say that the time has come. Maybe not tomorrow but, within a month, three months or half a year's time we should begin.

— Marshal Sergei Akromeyev, November 1989<sup>1</sup>

Though certainly the most specific offering to date, the East's Vienna proposal is only part of a wider Soviet package. The Soviet Union continues to press for such things as a multilateral conference on Asian affairs in which it would almost certainly raise naval issues; in Finland in October 1989, Gorbachev called again for a Nordic NWFZ and the elimination of all nuclear-weapon-carrying submarines from the Baltic and Nordic waters; in December, Gorbachev pressed again for mutual naval withdrawals from the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Soviet spokesmen continue to argue for additional, or "parallel," forums for the discussion of naval CSBMs, both with relationship to Vienna negotiations on conventional forces and in terms of other areas.

*As in the past, the Gorbachev-era proposals have not been confined to confidence-building-type arrangements, but these nevertheless have been the dominant emphasis. Though variously phrased, seldom detailed, and often jumbled together, the Gorbachev-period proposals embody four broad types of measures:*

- Informational arrangements, involving both general information exchanges on naval subjects and various provisions for advance notification and observation of naval activities.
- Navigational "rules of the road"—essentially an expansion of existing bilateral INCSEA agreements to add more provisions and more parties.
- Operational constraints, aimed variously at limiting numbers, sizes, and locations of naval exercises, requiring ships with certain weapons and delivery systems to stay beyond certain distances of coastlines, and providing for "sanctuaries" from ASW operations by the other side.
- Presence limitations, including "thin-out" zones in which naval presence would be limited, "keep-out" areas where it would be prohibited, NWFZs

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<sup>1</sup>"A Soldier Talks Peace," interview with Sergei Akromeyev, *Time*, November 13, 1989, p. 58.

aimed specifically at prohibiting naval nuclear ordnance, and arrangements intended to reduce or eliminate naval bases and support facilities.

### **INFORMATIONAL MEASURES**

Soviet proposals that are primarily informational in character<sup>2</sup> are of five types. First, there should be wider discussions and exchanges between the Soviet Union and the West on the "what" and "why" of naval forces. In Shevardnadze's formulation: "To enhance confidence, it would be useful to compare data on naval potentials, to discuss the principles of the use of the naval forces, and to compare the goals of exercises and maneuvers at sea."<sup>3</sup> How such a dialogue (or multilogue) would be arranged is seldom specified. Bilateral U.S.-Soviet navy-to-navy exchanges are already provided for in the U.S.-Soviet INCSEA Agreement of 1972. Soviet proposals, however, occasionally contemplate large multilateral, regional forums (in the East Asia/Pacific region, for example), where open discussions of "the principles of the use of naval forces" would most likely have, from a Soviet perspective, considerable propaganda value.

Second, the nuclear powers should agree to provide advance notification to all interested parties of the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on ships calling at foreign ports. Current (long-standing) U.S. policy in this area is to "neither confirm nor deny" (NCND). This is also the policy and the practice of the Soviet Union. The Soviet proposal is for a mutual change in policy "on the basis of reciprocity with the United States and other nuclear powers." In Shevardnadze's further formulation, "there is the attractive idea of collective efforts by countries concerned to develop technical means of verifying the absence of nuclear weapons aboard naval ships."<sup>4</sup>

Third, major naval exercises should be announced in advance. The Soviet Union has defined "major" for these purposes in different ways over time. In its Stockholm proposal in 1986, it spoke of exercises involving 30 ships and 100 aircraft; in Vienna (Fig. 2) this has been reduced to 20 combat ships, with notification to be made 42 days in advance. The aim, evidently, is not only to know more about scheduled exercises (typically in the West, large naval exercises are well known in advance, through annual exercise calendars, press communiques, notifications to the seamen and airmen who will

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<sup>2</sup>By this I do not mean that such proposals do not or would not have operational impacts, only that operational constraints are not their primary thrust.

<sup>3</sup>Shevardnadze (1988).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

participate, and the like), but also to forestall or make difficult major naval movements in periods of crisis that might otherwise be diplomatically disguised as exercises.

Fourth, major naval exercises should be observed by the other side. Inasmuch as both sides have national technical means to observe exercises at present (and the Soviet pattern has been traditionally to tag after major U.S./NATO exercises with "tattletale" vessels), this presumably means observers directly stationed on ships participating in exercises.<sup>5</sup>

Fifth, beyond exercises, "transfers" of ships, aircraft, and amphibious forces to other countries or within "zones of naval groups" should also be subject to (an unspecified period of) advance notification. As in the case of notification of exercises, the value presumably is to provide both sides with up-to-date information on unscheduled naval movements above a minimal size or composition.

Notably, though perhaps not surprisingly, the size and composition thresholds routinely put forward in the last three cases tend to capture U.S. activities to the virtual exclusion of Soviet operations. The emphasis is on surface forces and on surface forces with considerable air and SLCM capabilities; land-based naval aviation (a Soviet strong suit) is never mentioned; submarines are largely ignored; and tonnage minimums are set to capture larger U.S. ships and effectively exclude smaller Soviet surface vessels.

#### **NAVIGATIONAL RULES OF THE ROAD**

INCSEA-type arrangements are a form of operational constraint, but of a generally tactical nature. At present, the Soviet Union has negotiated bilateral (though essentially identical) INCSEA agreements with the United States, Britain, France, Norway, and Germany. The agreements have four major provisions:

- Regulation of dangerous maneuvers (requiring ships to remain well clear of each other and to show particular care when approaching ships engaged in launching or landing aircraft or in under way replenishment).
- Restriction of harassment (prohibitions of simulated attacks, various aerobatics over and near ships, dropping objects, flashing searchlights on ships' bridges, etc.).

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<sup>5</sup>On some occasions, however, Soviet representatives have suggested that it would not be necessary to view exercises "from the decks of the ships involved."

- Increased communication at sea (use of internationally recognized signals, advance notice of maneuvers and other actions that may present a danger to navigation and to aircraft).
- Regular consultations and information exchanges (including bilateral reviews of incidents that have occurred, an annual review of the agreement itself, and provisions for periodic agreement renewal).

The Soviet Union proposes to add further provisions to these agreements (specific distance limits between ships, coverage of submarine movements and operations), and expand their national participation (in effect, replacing existing bilateral treaties with larger, multilateral conventions). In the Vienna context, this might mean a 35-nation INCSEA agreement or perhaps a number of smaller subregional arrangements.

#### **OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS**

Soviet proposals for more far-reaching operational limitations take several forms. First, naval exercises should be limited in size, frequency, duration, and location. Such limitations have been expressed in various ways: in the Pacific, for example, the Soviets have proposed not more than two exercises annually by either side, these not to exceed 14 days; in Vienna (Fig. 2), the proposal is to limit exercises to about a half dozen a year, none to exceed two weeks. When an exercise begins and ends for purposes of defining duration is almost never specified: a not insignificant omission, since U.S. exercises are normally at much greater distances from home waters than Soviet exercises and involve more transit time.

Second, naval exercises above a certain size and composition should be banned entirely in certain water areas and within certain distances of the coastlines of nonallied states. Sea areas of prohibition have been described by the Soviets variously (and cryptically) as areas of "intense civil activity," areas of "international importance," "major international ocean lanes," and "zones of lower density of armaments and enhanced confidence." Shore distances have sometimes been expressed in terms of 200 miles—in effect, the extent of the EEZ.

Third, naval platforms and weapon systems posing particular first-strike threats to the other side should be kept out of range of the other's coastlines and land territory. In the argument of the Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy:

Large ship companies (including aircraft carriers) and multipurpose nuclear-powered submarines with *Tomahawk* and *Harpoon* missiles, torpedoes, and mines on board are located and training near our maritime

frontiers almost all the time. The great maneuverability and increased range, accuracy and power of their weapons create a real threat of surprise strikes from maritime axes and increase the possibility that a war could begin without advance operational deployment of groupings of naval forces.<sup>6</sup>

Fourth, ocean sanctuaries should be established in which the submarine-based strategic retaliatory forces of the two sides will be free from all ASW operations of the other. The aim is to sharpen the line between strategic and nonstrategic forces at sea, in order to better protect the first from the second. In the Soviet case, this would mean the elimination of all Western detection, monitoring, and patrol operations—airborne, surface, and submarine—in and around Soviet SSBN bastions. Since the United States does not bastion its SSBNs, it is not clear what the proposal would look like on the U.S. side.

#### **PRESENCE LIMITATIONS**

Last, there should be six kinds of limitations on general naval presence in various regions of the world. First, NWFZs should be more widely established, and those that have already been declared should be tightened so as to eliminate existing naval loopholes.<sup>7</sup> Second, there should be agreements among the major naval powers not to introduce, enlarge, or expand their naval forces in various regions during periods of crisis. This would reduce risks of accidents and mishaps; it would also, of course, tightly curtail the use of naval forces as political leverage on events in these regions.

Third, in areas in which one or more naval powers has already established a regular or permanent naval presence, steps should be taken to partially disengage or draw down these forces to lower levels. This might be accomplished in several ways: limits on numbers (or aggregate tonnage) of ships in such areas at any given time, limits on certain classes of ships, or ceilings on total (annual) steaming or ship-days. In the case of the Mediterranean, for example, the Soviets have proposed that "both sides could set the limit of 15 combat ships and 10 escorts in order to achieve an agreement on freezing the number of Soviet and American vessels."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Admiral of the Fleet V. Chernavin, "High Vigilance and Combat Readiness are the Command of the Times," *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 2, 1988, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>The two multilateral NWFZ treaties, Tlateloco and Rarotonga, for instance, have specific provisions or attached protocols effectively eliminating any constraint on naval operations. Lacy (1990a).

<sup>8</sup>"Chernavin Proposes Fewer Mediterranean Ships," TASS, April 25, 1988; reprinted in FBIS, *Soviet Union*, April 25, 1988, p. 1.

Fourth, "international straits" (which appear to be precisely the choke-points at which Soviet forces are most vulnerable to interdiction) should be subject to special presence limitations.

Limiting naval activity in international straits is a new way, meaning also the Baltic straits, Denmark Strait, the English Channel and the Iceland-Faeroe Islands-Scandinavia area. An effort could be made to prevent the concentration of naval forces in international straits and on the approaches to them and to reach agreement on limitations as to the numbers, classes and other indicators.<sup>9</sup>

Fifth, both sides should agree to reduce their overseas bases and naval support facilities with a view toward eliminating all military bases on foreign soil by the year 2000. In this vein, the Soviet Union has proposed giving up its naval facility at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, in exchange for U.S. withdrawal from bases in the Philippines. Finally, in certain areas, there should be complete "denavalization,"—that is, save for very limited port visits and familiarity cruises, all nonlittoral naval presence should be permanently removed.

#### THE SELDOM SAID

The Gorbachev-period proposals have little or nothing to say about how these various measures would be implemented and verified. Clearly, some propositions (such as the proposed dismantling of specifically identified naval bases) present fewer problems along these lines than others (operational or presence constraints affecting submarines, for example, where it is in the nature of the asset to avoid all types of presence detection). But no proposition, even in the case of bases, is clear-cut.<sup>10</sup> Verifying that aircraft aboard U.S. carriers and SLCMs on other vessels are or are not nuclear-capable would be extremely difficult in the best of cases.

In a similar vein, penalties for violations, circumventions, and noncompliance are barely, if ever, adumbrated. Unlike structural arrangements, where one party might advance and act upon explicit provisions covering actions to be taken in the event of a major circumvention or "break-out" by the other, the courses available are much less obvious in terms of such things as failures to provide advance notification of naval

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<sup>9</sup>Yuri Deryabin, "The Echo of Murmansk," *International Affairs*, Moscow, June 1988, p. 46; cited in Roger Barnett, "Naval Arms Control: One-Way Channel," paper presented at the Inter-University Seminar Biennial Conference, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, October 27-29, 1989, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>"To distinguish among facilities, bases and anchorages on the one hand, and among ownership, control and use on the other, will be difficult if not impossible." Haass (1979), p. 27.

movements or of naval transits into prohibited or limited areas. (Would, for example, a ship wandering into a prohibited zone be subject to seizure or firing upon, a matter only of general diplomatic protest, or a cause for the other party to renounce all or part of its own commitments?)

<b>Informational</b>	<b>Rules of the Road</b>	<b>Presence Limitations</b>
General dialogue	More INCSEA provisions	NWFZs
Advance notice of nuclear weaponry on board ships	Multilateral substitutes/supplements	Agreements to not expand presence in certain areas
Advance notice of naval exercises	<b>Operational Constraints</b>	Mutual drawdowns of naval presence
Observers at exercises	Limits on exercises	
Advance notice of movements and deployments	Prohibitions of exercises in certain waters	Reductions leading to elimination of foreign bases
	Distance restrictions on certain capabilities	
	ASW sanctuaries	Total naval disengagement in certain areas

Fig. 4—The galaxy of Soviet propositions

Perhaps the most crucial omission along these lines concerns what might be called “escape clauses.” At the end of the day, no major power is likely to agree to any arrangement from which it has no means of escape. Two “escapes” are relevant in this setting: provisions to allow one party to opt out or to take responding/retaliatory measures in the face of violations by the other, and “reservations” intended to take account of other defense commitments and provide future flexibility to respond to events caused by or involving third parties. The United States has never committed itself to defend another country without reserving a national right to determine at the time what such defense might entail; it is improbable that it would commit itself to any arrangement that might limit its ability to defend others without similar reservations built into the arrangement.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the Soviet Union has never locked itself into iron-clad

<sup>11</sup>Typically, U.S. alliance arrangements commit the United States to “act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes,” and frequently come with other “understandings” aimed at preserving a flexibility of judgment at the time. Even in the North Atlantic Treaty, in which the signatories agreed that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all,” the signatories are pledged only to “consult together” in the event of a threat (article 4) and, in the event of an armed

automatic defenses of other nations. Yet, such "third-party" or "exogenous event" escape clauses tend to operate in directions opposite the putative purposes of many of the Soviet Union's proposals. Either a confidence-building arrangement—especially one that is cast in regional terms—precludes flexibility to respond (which the Soviet Union might not find desirable itself) or it does not—in which case the central rationale of the arrangement itself is not self-evident.

### THE ELUSIVE AGENDA

It is not surprising that the motives behind Soviet propositions are as uncertain as the surface meanings of many of the propositions themselves. In part, this is because Soviet "new thinking" (*novoe myshlenie*) still eludes confident analysis. "The challenge in understanding the changes being implemented by Gorbachev is more difficult because we are trying to draw conclusions from a story that is in its first chapter."<sup>12</sup> Yet, it is reasonable to assume that behind this large bouquet of disparate proposals lies some combination of genuine national security concerns, issues of "equity" in East-West arms control, and concerns about domestic politics within the Soviet Union itself.

Evidently, the Soviets continue to have a strong (if outdated) concern about U.S. aircraft carriers. Through the mid-1960s, U.S. nuclear planning for strategic warfare included large-scale attacks from carrier-based aircraft and medium-range bombers based in airfields surrounding the Soviet Union. In 1967, however, the United States effectively relieved the carrier of its strategic nuclear role in favor of the Polaris ballistic missile submarine (from two Polaris submarines on patrol in 1960, the U.S. fleet grew to 41 by the summer of 1966). A preference for land-based strategic ballistic missiles over manned bombers took effect at about the same time (1965 marked the first year when there were more missiles than aircraft in the U.S. Air Force's strategic inventory).<sup>13</sup> Though the developments are well-known to the Soviet Union, the continued presence of nuclear gravity bombs on U.S. carrier-based strike aircraft evidently remains a source of alarm to the Soviet military.

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attack, to take "forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as [each] deems necessary, including the use of armed force" (article 5). The U.S. guarantee in NATO is not the treaty commitment, but the presence of U.S. forces along the areas of possible attack.

<sup>12</sup>Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, USN, Director of Naval Intelligence, quoted in "Soviet Naval Cutbacks Reported," *Washington Post*, February 23, 1989, p. A12.

<sup>13</sup>See, generally, Lacy (1983), Chapter 4.



The U.S. "Maritime Strategy" of the 1980s merely underscored Soviet security concerns: that the United States will launch conventional attacks against the Soviet homeland in the early stages of a war between the superpowers, and that the U.S. Navy will employ its attack submarines to neutralize Soviet SSBNs in their bastions. In the words of Akromeyev in early 1990:

It is the [U.S.] naval strategy that has a most pronounced offensive nature . . . . To . . . ensure the readiness for a long global war with the use of conventional warfare against the Soviet Union, the United States [has] deployed mighty forward-based units (operating fleets) in the immediate vicinity of the USSR territory. Their use is planned in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans and in the seas, with the beginning of war, to gain strategic initiative and to conduct operations not only against the Soviet Navy but also to deliver blows at the territories of the Soviet Union. It means that the actions of the U.S. naval forces in the time of peace are of immediate concern for the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup>

In this vein, the reactions of a senior Soviet naval officer to a large U.S./allied naval exercise in the Northern Pacific in 1989 (PACEX-89) are illuminating.

One of the events that has caused alarm to us . . . is PACEX 89. We had a year's prior knowledge that this exercise would occur—you gave us that information. But we did not think that such a major exercise with so many countries and exercises would take place. But it did take place, and I have to tell you that it achieved tactical surprise in that. We did not deploy subs, and prevented SNA flights in the exercise area, but we were obliged to send out Soviet [air force] aircraft to observe; . . . [The] fact is that such ship groupings . . . are capable of full combat operations in 5–10 minutes, in order to take defensive measures, we need some time. Military history (especially 1941) illustrates that is something we absolutely cannot allow to happen.<sup>15</sup>

Quite apart from (or in addition to) these security interests, there is an important element of balance and equity in arms control dealings with the West. In the words of the Deputy Chief of the Soviet General Staff: "NATO has superiority in strike aviation and naval forces. Elementary fairness and interest in security says that we cannot unilaterally

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<sup>14</sup>S. F. Akromeyev, "Naval Arms and Their Development in Terms of Soviet-U.S. Relations," unpublished paper presented at the "International Seminar on the Problems of Naval Arms Limitation and Naval Activities Reduction," Moscow, February 8, 1990, pp. 5–6.

<sup>15</sup>Admiral N. Markov, Deputy Director of Naval Department General Staff, remarks at the Maritime Strategy Dialogue Conference, Adderbury, UK, November 17–20, 1989 (debriefing provided to the author).

have one set of imbalances removed and another set not removed."<sup>16</sup> Certainly to the Soviet leadership, the East has already made all the important concessions.

When the U.S. rejected negotiations on naval forces, the Soviet Union made a big concession and said it was willing to wait and hold negotiations on strategic weapons and armed forces in Europe. Little is said about this nowadays, but it gave an important impetus to the negotiations. If you consider this to be a concession, it was, but if it were not for this concession we would still be marching in place.<sup>17</sup>

In Akromeyev's complaint, it is difficult for Soviet leaders to explain domestically why the Soviet Union is reducing greatly in its areas of strength while the United States is not reducing at all in its area of greatest strength.

Such [a U.S.] policy is unreasonable. If continued by the United States, it will be perceived by the USSR with mistrust. In such a situation it is impossible to convince our people that the United States really intends to put an end to the confrontation between our countries and to build new relations based on mutual cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

Yet if this explains some number of Soviet proposals, it nevertheless fails to explain why there are so many disparate proposals, and why the emphasis is on confidence-building rather than on actual reductions in naval structure. Viewed in a favorable light, the proposals themselves are a decidedly mixed and largely uncertain bag (see Fig. 5).<sup>19</sup> Some propositions would have almost no practical consequences, some might arguably be helpful, others would likely operate to the direct disadvantage of the United States. In this, there may be an additional element. The Soviet leadership may not know what it wants in the naval sphere (or may not be able to reach internal agreement) or know how to cherish and set priorities for it, and is fishing vigorously but aimlessly, animated by a strong sense of principle ("fairness") and a generalized complaint (the U.S. Navy is too busy and meddlesome to suit Soviet tastes).

## THE U.S. RESPONSE

The United States has not proposed any major initiatives in this area. For the most part, it has tended to ignore rather than specifically react to Soviet proposals. Although

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<sup>16</sup>Colonel General Makhmud Gareev, quoted in "East's Military Posture 'Depends on NATO Deal,'" *Times* (London), October 18, 1988, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>Akromeyev (1989), p. 58.

<sup>18</sup>Akromeyev (1990), p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>I am indebted to RAND colleague William Schwabe for suggesting this particular way of viewing the policy implications.

Proposition	Impact on U.S.	Impact on USSR	Impact on Others
General dialogue	May help improve U.S.-Soviet relations	May help improve U.S.-Soviet relations	Generally useful
Advance notice of nuclear weaponry on board ships	Requires abandoning NCND policy; invites political difficulties with host nations; no purely military impact, as the truth is generally known	Relatively little impact; by sponsoring proposal, USSR seeks political gains with some countries	Would be cheered by some countries but would present domestic political problems for some governments such as Japan
Advance notice of naval exercises	Would have little practical effect; although the names and dates of most exercises are classified Confidential, they are generally known to all interested parties	Most Soviet exercises are too small to require notice	Would give objecting countries opportunity to complain more credibly
Observers at exercises	Offers intelligence opportunities and vulnerabilities; depends on terms	Same	Same
Advance notice of movements and deployments	May complicate U.S. ability to intervene in crisis situations; allows better ocean surveillance by countries with the means	Similar impact	Less impact
More INCSEA provisions	Could be useful, but bilateral agreements may be easier to negotiate	Same	Same
Multilateral substitutes/supplements	Could be helpful in disputes in which U.S. is not a party; otherwise, could restrict U.S. ability to intervene	Similar	Appealing to some countries

Fig. 5—Implications of Soviet proposals

Proposition	Impact on U.S.	Impact on USSR	Impact on Others
Limits on exercises	Restricts U.S., but in the near term U.S. may not be willing to afford large exercises anyway	No restriction on generally smaller Soviet exercises; might make Soviets feel good about gaining a concession from U.S.	No impact on own exercises
Prohibitions of exercises in certain waters	Restricts U.S. policy; might have merit if it applied to matters such as Soviet submarine operations near Sweden, but difficult to verify; most likely very bad for U.S.	Depending on terms, may disproportionately favor USSR	To the advantage of countries seeking to extend control over territorial waters
Distance restrictions on certain capabilities	Threatens U.S. capability to intervene	Similar, but less a matter of practical concern	Beneficial to parties subject to U.S. or other naval intervention
NWFZs	May be acceptable if U.S. removes tactical nuclear weapons from surface ships; unacceptable if restricts SSBN deployments	Little impact	Would give some countries feeling of increased confidence and security
Agreements to not expand presence in certain areas	Restricts U.S. ability to intervene in crisis situations	Similar but less impact	Helps those vulnerable to gun-boat diplomacy; hurts those relying on it
Mutual drawdowns of naval presence	No military benefit; may save money	Helps correlation of forces	May give countries, such as India, opportunity to become dominant in region
Reductions leading to elimination of foreign bases	Hurts U.S. and its alliance structure, but if U.S. is going to do it anyway, could have political benefits	Little impact	Varies
Total naval disengagement in certain areas	Reduces U.S. capability	Improves Soviet security	Varies

Fig. 5 (continued)

the U.S. Navy leadership has spoken on a number of occasions about the hazards of permitting general purpose naval forces to become ensnared in any ongoing arms control negotiations, this has been mostly very generalized in content. The principal exception (thus far the most detailed U.S. Navy critique of Soviet proposals) was Admiral Larson's testimony to the Congress in April 1989. Confidence-building measures in the naval sphere, Larson told the House Armed Services Committee, are, variously, unnecessary, undesirable, and impractical. In Larson's words:

- Western naval forces have global responsibilities, and therefore should not be restricted in a regional arms control regime, such as CSBMs for Europe and adjacent seas.
- Naval forces inport [sic] are easily observed by national technical means. Underway and on the high seas they may be observed by a variety of tactical reconnaissance means. Such precautions as advance notification, inspectors, and similar CSBMs are not required for stability.
- Although subject to external intelligence monitoring, naval units do not lend themselves to close observation or on-site (i.e., shipboard) inspections (fundamental elements of a CSBM regime) without an unacceptable level of intrusiveness.
- Confidence-building measures could force the U.S. into more predictable or disadvantageous deployment patterns, thus presenting the Soviets with a less effective deterrent posture.
- The U.S. need to operate naval forces, globally and unconstrained, is analogous to the Soviet need to maintain the freedom to reposition armed forces within their borders. The SLOCs defended by the Navy have exactly the same vital importance to the West as the railway system defended by the Soviet army.
- To expand CSBMs to include naval forces would establish an undesirable precedent for their inclusion in other conventional arms control negotiations. Because of the West's much greater dependence on the sea, CSBMs which have been proposed to date, or the possible constraints to which they might lead, would favor the Soviet Union over the West.
- Any type of CSBMs which would limit access to certain geographic areas would pose a problem of international law.

- Naval CSBMs are a difficult issue to address, their effect is subtle, but they have potentially significant implications for national defense. In short, any arms control agreement restricting naval flexibility or capabilities would weaken the West's deterrent posture and consequently decrease Western security.<sup>20</sup>

Slightly more conciliatory was the later testimony of Carl Ford, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. Whereas Larson ruled out all CSBMs, Ford was prepared to draw the line at the point where confidence-building has operational consequences.

We are not opposed to some measures designed to lower tensions and help alleviate legitimate concerns. I would think that the United States, if the agreement does not limit our operational flexibility, would be willing to [agree to] advance notification of some exercises, reducing the frequency of exercises, and limiting the size of yet others.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Larson (1989), pp. 18-19.

<sup>21</sup>"Statement of Carl W. Ford Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Internal Security Affairs before the U.S. House of Representatives, Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee," March 13, 1990, p. 3.

## VI. SOVIET OPTIONS

Why is it that the United States refuses talks on reducing naval forces and disagrees on any restrictions on their military activity?

— Marshal Sergei Akromeyev, September 1988<sup>1</sup>

Larson's and Ford's statements are scarcely the last word from the West on the subject, but they do serve to illuminate the Soviet problem. In the U.S. perspective, Soviet overtures in this area are either trivial (and irrelevant) or much too troublesome (and irrelevant) to be taken seriously. Certainly for the Soviet Union, there is not much to show for the effort. Four years after Gorbachev intensified Soviet efforts to engage the United States in naval negotiations, almost nothing has changed in this area. Although CDE has provided an opening, it is not an unobstructed path. The West continues to insist on a "functional link" (effectively precluding almost everything in the naval sphere); the NNAs have ventured off with their own, narrowly drawn package of naval CSBMs. Soviet ground and air forces in Europe are being and will be further reduced as a result of unilateral Soviet cuts, increasing pressures from East European governments that Soviet forces be removed, and the CFE negotiations on force reductions—yet naval forces, in Shevardnadze's complaint, "still remain off-limits." Outside Vienna, the United States continues to display no interest in budging from its present "no how, no way" posture toward naval negotiations.

For the Soviet Union, the situation ahead cannot look much better. If the United States had few incentives to discuss naval limitations in the recent past, the Soviet calculation has to be that the West will have even fewer incentives in the period to come. In the summer of 1989, Akromeyev hinted darkly that "no reductions in the armed forces and armaments of the world will be possible" unless the United States "will accommodate our concerns with regard to naval forces."<sup>2</sup> But, whether or not this was a real option in the past, it is hardly a realistic Soviet stance entering the 1990s. With the virtual collapse of the WTO as a military alliance in the final months of 1989, the Soviet Union has few cards to play in the CFE force reduction negotiations in Vienna. Indeed, with the Soviet Union facing pressures from a number of its WTO allies to unilaterally

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<sup>1</sup>*Pravda*, September 5, 1988; reprinted in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, September 6, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>Akromeyev (1989), p. 15.

withdraw its forces from Central Europe, a reciprocal CFE arrangement is probably now more in the interest of the Soviet Union than of the West.<sup>3</sup> For different but related reasons, the Soviet Union is not likely to view delays in reaching a START agreement on strategic nuclear systems as working in its favor, or attempts to link a START agreement to naval concessions as a course likely to lead anywhere. But to abandon the subject entirely in the face of blanket Western resistance is scarcely an option either. As noted in the preceding section, for the Soviet Union, in both a military and a political sense, there is an important element of balance and equity.

If the foregoing is so (and perceived by the Soviet leadership to be so), future Soviet options are fairly limited. On the one hand, the Soviet Union may opt to do nothing differently. Keeping the public pressure on the United States, even if it is unlikely to result in any real naval concessions, may nonetheless have a useful propaganda and political value. The gain may be small, but the price to be paid for staying on this course is equally small. On the other hand, Moscow may realize, may indeed already have realized, that there is more ritualism than relevance to its approach to naval limitations and that a more discretely tailored package of naval arrangements would serve its interests far better than its present overtures. In this case, it may calculate that the potential benefits of a modest arrangement with the West outweigh the costs of sacrificing cherished but realistically unreachable aspirations. Accordingly, the Soviet Union might return to the drawing board, narrow and refine its naval limitations agenda, and come forward eventually with a series of proposals that would (a) arguably be more acceptable to the West, and (b) in any case make it harder for the United States and NATO to reject them out of hand.

There is a third option as well. More imaginatively, the Soviet Union might seek to redefine the agenda entirely by reaching beyond confidence-building measures to bolder forms of structural naval arms control. Apart from seeking to limit SLCMs in the START negotiating context, the Soviet leadership thus far has had relatively little to say about reductions in naval inventories, and then, mostly in terms that the West has promptly rejected. But the Soviet Union might reach the judgment that it is precisely in

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<sup>3</sup>This, however, has not deterred Akromeyev from continuing to imply that other East-West arms control is at risk unless the United States changes course on naval matters. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in May 1990, Akromeyev again said that without U.S. naval concessions, "it will be impossible to achieve radical reductions of armed forces and armaments in the world." The initial round of CFE will not be affected, he said, but it is "100 percent right" that the Soviet Union will insist on naval negotiations as a "prerequisite" to follow-on CFE talks in Vienna. "Soviets Insist on Sea Talks," *Washington Post*, May 9, 1990, p. A20.



structural drawdowns that it has something to offer the West, which the West would in turn find difficult to dismiss out of hand.

To suggest these possibilities (which are not mutually exclusive in any case) is not to imply, of course, that the Soviet Union would necessarily view its options in these terms or think about them in the ways discussed below. Indeed, it is not even to suggest that the Soviet Union is serious about naval arms negotiations—only that it is serious about limiting the West's naval operations in a strategically beneficial way from a Soviet perspective. Furthermore, to isolate considerations in this area from the range of (largely unknowable) factors that will influence Soviet policy choices in the future is clearly artificial. But these are familiar and unavoidable handicaps. The Soviet Union still has choices. Speculating on how these choices *might* be made may not bring one any closer to understanding how they *will* be made, but it is probably the best second approach.

#### STAYING THE COURSE

Temptations for the Soviet Union to stay the course are bound to be strong. For one thing, it avoids difficult questions. For another, the outcomes are at least familiar and reasonably predictable. To continue to press across the board for naval constraints, fully aware that the West will continue to resist, may be cynical, but it is scarcely irrational. Consider the factors that the Soviet leadership would have to weigh in the balance.

Realistically, the Soviet Union has little to offer the United States in terms of constraining its own naval operations. Its fleet presence around the world is declining—a trend that is not likely to be reversed in the foreseeable future. In the 1990s, it faces block obsolescence in parts of its fleet, notably its submarine force, for which it will have neither the means nor the enthusiasm to fully compensate. Indeed, its navy's share of its (also declining) military expenditures will probably decline at least as sharply as other spending areas. Internally, the Soviet navy, traditionally a weak sister among the Soviet military services, has no credible and capable champion. The late Admiral Gorshkov—who almost single-handedly built the modern Soviet navy—is widely discredited as having had too many foolish ambitions. These circumstances are known to the United States. In the face of no real Soviet *quid pro quo* to provide, the United States has almost no incentives to enter into naval negotiations.

Although the 1990s will not be a time of renaissance for the Soviet navy, naval forces will not be a growth industry for the United States and most of the West either. Under severe budgetary pressures, the U.S. Navy will almost certainly retire all or close to all of its four battleships. How many deployed CTOL aircraft carriers it will have in

the late 1990s is uncertain, but it will certainly be fewer than the present 14, and could be as few as 10. It is by no means clear that the United States can hold on to its Philippines bases through the 1990s; it will jerry-rig other support facilities, to be sure, but these will be more costly, more logistically fractured, and probably less efficient. Fewer platforms, fewer bases, and tightened fiscal corsets will translate into other things—fewer large exercises, shorter exercises, and less (or less continuous) presence in forward waters. NATO's navies will not substitute for this decline. For one thing, they do not have the capability. More important, NATO governments will not have the interest. If anything, NATO's navies will probably decline at a faster pace than the U.S. Navy. In short, some (though clearly not all) of the things about the West's naval activities that have troubled the Soviet Union in the past will take care of themselves.

For the Soviet Union, while the foregoing would seem to be a recipe for abandoning an aggressive public diplomacy in this area, it is equally an argument for continuing. The current menu of Soviet propositions may not accelerate any of the above developments, but it may help in some marginal way, and, in any case, there is no price to pay for keeping on the pressure. The U.S. Congress may not be greatly enticed by the allure of Soviet naval arms control diplomacy (this is not entirely sure), but it may find in continuing Soviet overtures a way of rationalizing U.S. cutbacks that would need to be taken on other grounds. In any case, there are other parliaments in the West that may be more than marginally influenced.

Were the Soviet leadership to make a rational calculation, it may well conclude that while various Soviet proposals for presence limitations, zones of peace, and the like are old habits that make little sense from a contemporary Soviet perspective, they continue to serve useful political purposes so long as the West assures by its predictable opposition that such things will never come to be. The Soviet Union's interest in the use of the seas has matured considerably since the early 1950s, when Moscow first began declaiming about these matters. In the UNCLOS negotiations, the Soviet Union and the United States were in agreement on virtually every issue affecting the high seas. With limited coastlines of its own, the Soviet Union is as interested as the traditional maritime nations in unimpeded freedom of navigation and needs to be concerned as much as the United States about exaggerated jurisdictional claims to adjoining sea areas by wayward littoral nations.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, it would be difficult to drop a still propagandistically

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<sup>4</sup>The Soviet Union, for example, is heavily dependent on the EEZs of other countries for its fishing fleets.

useful set of proposals without risking some embarrassment or backlash among the nations that traditionally applaud these ideas.

In these regards, far-flung naval diplomacy never worked well for the Soviet Union. But if gunboat diplomacy is unappealing in the Soviet future, standing foursquare for peace at sea by proposing grand naval limitations has no negative operational consequences. In short, if it is true that the United States has few if any incentives to negotiate naval propositions—and if it is apparent that even if the West had incentives it would fail to recognize and act upon them—it is equally true that the Soviet Union has no obvious incentives to do anything other than continue to push the issue as expansively and opportunistically as possible.

#### **DISTILLING A NEGOTIABLE CONFIDENCE-BUILDING AGENDA**

There is, of course, a second avenue potentially open to the Soviet Union. This is to seek a modest, but still perhaps useful, naval accommodation with the West. It would mean reducing and refining Soviet policy in this area in order to produce what is arguably a more realistic menu for negotiation. This would inevitably mean abandoning or scaling back a number of propositions with which the Soviet Union has long been associated. But a hard-headed Soviet reappraisal might lead in this direction. In other areas, the current Soviet leadership has been prepared to recognize and even correct past mistakes. It is thus not unthinkable that Moscow might also be prepared to ask hard questions and confront basic deficiencies in its traditional approach to naval limitations.

For such an approach to be realistic at all, Moscow would need to be clearer in its own mind about what it really wants in this area, how its various proposals work or do not work to that end, and where the broad boundaries of Western receptiveness are set. Almost certainly, the first task would entail being much clearer about the nature of Soviet security concerns so far as Western naval operations are concerned. Though the question seems simple enough—What is the character of the threat posed by the West's naval operations, and how do Soviet confidence-building proposals mitigate it?—there is little evidence that it has been critically addressed in Moscow in recent years. Certainly in the past, the principally voiced Soviet concern has been about the potential for first strikes by the West from the sea—nuclear or conventional. Peacetime arrangements that would force naval power projection capabilities out of range of Soviet territory are logical in this context, but only if the concern itself is logical. Yet, absent a means to follow up on and secure areas of attack from the sea, surprise first strikes from the sea axes make virtually no military or strategic sense. Indeed, apart from the strategic strike at Pearl Harbor—

which in essence was still a classic navy-on-navy engagement—it is impossible to locate an instance in modern warfare where hostilities began with a surprise naval strike. This, of course, leaves follow-on strikes from the sea after hostilities have begun. But, as noted in Sec. III, stand-off arrangements worked out in peacetime are irrelevant once the parties are engaged in an actual conflict. Indeed, even more limited concerns about incidents at sea seem exaggerated when looked at closely. Though safety at sea is a useful objective in its own terms, it is difficult to frame INCSEA-type arrangements in clear and compelling security terms. Simply put, it is difficult to imagine (and impossible to find a historical illustration of) an incident at sea that, through misinterpretation or miscalculation, leads to major hostilities.<sup>5</sup>

In this vein, a rational Soviet calculus might also conclude that there is more bark than bite in the U.S. Navy's "maritime strategy." True, this strategy in the 1980s contemplated early offensive measures against Soviet SSBNs and the Soviet homeland, but these aspects were always controversial within the United States and NATO and were never fully endorsed in formal declaratory policy. A sharply diminished Soviet threat in Europe undercuts much of the strategic rationale and political support for building and posturing U.S. naval forces in these ways. Besides, an observation advanced at the time the U.S. Navy's "maritime strategy" was being formulated bears keeping in mind: "To the extent that ambitious strategy and muscular visions of wartime missions make plausible politically the case for certain levels and kinds of forces, they cannot be disregarded, but this hardly means that any administration would actually choose to use U.S. forces according to these prescriptions in something as serious as an actual war."<sup>6</sup>

There is a broader deficiency in this area that the Soviet Union almost certainly would need to come to terms with. Much of what it has traditionally urged in the naval sphere mixes a small number of propositions that have a plausible military and security content with a wider array of proposals that are almost entirely political in character. Certainly in a zero-sum game it may be argued that anything that complicates the operations of the U.S. Navy enhances Soviet security. Yet it is precisely the political mischievousness of a number of Soviet naval propositions that make them wholly

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<sup>5</sup>The U.S. experience in World War I is instructive on this count. The German sinking of the passenger liner *Lusitania* in May 1914 provoked angry protests from the United States. But the U.S. entered the war three years later, only after Germany declared in January 1917 that henceforth all German submarines would attack on sight any American ship, armed or unarmed, in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and then only after three unarmed American merchantmen were sunk without warning in March.

<sup>6</sup>Lacy (1983), p. 525.

unacceptable to the West. For the United States to agree, for example, to announce in advance of port visits the presence or absence of nuclear ordnance on ships and aircraft would severely strain U.S. naval presence and operations. But it would be difficult to make the case that any immediate or real Soviet security interest is at stake, or that Soviet confidence and security are somehow enhanced. The same can be said for most operational constraints and presence limitations once beyond the Soviet Union's "maritime frontiers." Clearly, for Moscow to define its naval confidence-building interests as matters more narrowly focused on military confidence-building works against long-ingrained habits of thinking. Still, a Soviet leadership interested in making any headway with the West would seem to be forced into that choice.

No serious review of Soviet options could avoid the conclusion that the current Soviet agenda is simply too sweeping, hydra-headed, and unfocused to be taken seriously in the West. So many lines with so many different lures have been cast in recent years that it is difficult to guess what exactly the Soviet Union is fishing for, or whether it has serious expectations of a catch at all. This, understandably, raises questions in the West about Soviet genuineness. It plays into concerns in the West that once any naval discussions are opened, the process will quickly degenerate into an unending and uncongenial grab for Western concessions along a host of fronts. At the same time, the absence of focus, of prioritization, of even basic detail, also gives rise to questions about Soviet competence.

Fourth, the Soviet habit of offering up propositions that are one-sided in formulation and lopsided in implication, in Vienna and elsewhere, can scarcely be said to advance Soviet interests. The propensity would be more understandable if the playing field were even, but when the West enters the picture with few incentives to begin with, it has to be counterproductive from even a narrow Soviet perspective to advance a package of propositions whose only discernible common thread is that their limits on the West's naval operations are disproportionate to those on the Soviet side.

It would also have to be evident in any serious reevaluation that a number of ideas simply have not been thought through. It would certainly be in the Soviet interest to secure from the West an ASW-free sanctuary for Soviet ballistic missile submarines, but how would such an arrangement work? For one thing, its implementation would require unparalleled, unprecedented, and barely imaginable levels of cooperation between the nuclear powers. For another, third-party states would have to be brought into it. As the Norwegian defense minister observed, such strategic sanctuaries "cast political shadows on the shores of the littoral states whose security and sovereignty would become closely

entangled with the management of the central balance of nuclear deterrence between the two principal powers."<sup>7</sup> More important, what precisely does the Soviet Union expect from the United States? There seem to be only two courses: either only one side (the Soviet Union) gets such a sanctuary, or the United States would be required to restrict its ballistic missile submarines to a given area. Not only would both be unacceptable to the United States, the second may also be destabilizing from a narrow Soviet perspective. From a U.S. perspective, an imposed bastioning of its own forces would define where the Soviet Union could concentrate its strategic ASW efforts, permit focused searches in an area vastly smaller than the 42.5 million square miles that a U.S. Trident-II submarine currently enjoys, and almost certainly lead to Soviet surveillance of the zone from just beyond its perimeters.<sup>8</sup> Raising the possibility of a preemptive barrage nuclear attack against the U.S. zone would erode U.S. confidence in its retaliatory force. From the Soviet perspective in turn, it would risk making the United States less, not more, predictable in crisis situations.

The same observation might be ventured about other aspects. As noted in Sec. III, even seemingly prosaic factors, such as who participates in CSBM arrangements, are pregnant with difficulties. George Kennan's observation made over the years, that the failure of any negotiation correlates with the square of the number of participants, would need to be taken seriously in any future Soviet calculation. To reach agreement upon, let alone implement, many Soviet proposals, especially those with a regional orientation, would require complex interactions involving many parties with different political perspectives and military capabilities.

Finally, at a time when the entire geostrategic equation is undergoing profound but unpredictable transformation, it would seem to be in the Soviet interest, no less than in the interest of the West, to avoid negotiated constraints that would impinge upon future flexibility or that might spill over into other areas like the law of the sea. Nor would it be sensible to press for naval arrangements requiring radical solutions or radical departures from familiar patterns and arrangements.

Were such observations to permeate a Soviet review of future options in this area, they would suggest several broad guidelines for Soviet policy. Propositions are more likely to be credible (and thus arguably more acceptable) when:

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<sup>7</sup>Holst (1989), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>See, for example, D. Douglas Dalgleish and Larry Schweikart, "One Missile for the Triad," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, August 1989, p. 75; and Barnett (1989), p. 7.

- The arrangements proposed correspond plausibly and directly to East-West security interests (that is, they do not wander into political matters and geographical areas unrelated to strict security concerns or seek to capture and constrain nonrelevant assets and activities).
- Potential spill-overs with (and perhaps unhappy precedents for) larger political/legal issues concerning freedom of navigation and jurisdictional rights in the seas are avoided.
- The ideas themselves are relatively simple in execution and verifiable in implementation.
- Radical solutions requiring significant departures from current policies, patterns, and practices are avoided.
- Participation is less rather than more, and arrangements less rather than more formal.

To apply such narrowing principles will be difficult for the Soviet Union, to be sure. It would mean jettisoning (or at least putting off for an indefinite period) a number of ideas with which the Soviet Union has long been associated: NWFZs, ASW sanctuaries, virtually all presence limitations, and most operational constraints. It would entail explicit acceptance that the United States will continue to have a significant comparative advantage over the Soviet Union in the naval sphere. It will probably require that agreements be more political than legal, more implicit than negotiated, although there are certainly parts that lend themselves to explicit negotiation.

The kind of confidence-building agenda that the Soviet Union would be left with would certainly be more modest, but not without content. It would feature a more limited but not unuseful definition of confidence-building to, in one observer's words, "encourage military organizations to be more forthcoming about the size, structure and activities of their forces."<sup>9</sup> This would put the primary emphasis on informational measures, but these would not necessarily be wholly static and could be extended to dynamic information exchanges (such things as advance notifications and observations of exercises and maneuvers).

It would also probably mean focusing Soviet efforts for the time being on the one place where a mechanism for dealing with these subjects already exists. This is Vienna. So far as the CDE talks are concerned, a rational Soviet calculation might anticipate that,

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<sup>9</sup>Barnett (1989), p. 18.

although the United States and NATO will still seek to enforce the "functional link" requirement (in effect, establishing the "firebreak at the water's edge"), the West's opposition to Soviet proposals for advance notifications and exercise limits would be less keenly held if the East adjusted its proposals in three broad ways. First, as currently proposed by the East, the impact of the exercise provisions (notification, observation, prohibitions) falls exclusively on the West (as tabled, the proposal will have no effect on Soviet naval exercises). But this may be managed by adjusting the notification thresholds so as to capture fewer exercises or by introducing additional provisions such that NATO might observe Soviet exercises in home waters and perhaps, through an open-skies arrangement, also observe exercises and maneuvers involving Soviet SNA. Second, the Soviet Union might calculate that there would be less objection from the West were some special provision or exception made for naval activities in the Mediterranean (no advance notifications, or notifications of only truly large naval movements). The Mediterranean is simply too distinctive from the West's political and security perspective (and probably from the Soviet Union's as well) to be treated like the Black, Greenland, Baltic, North, and Norwegian Seas. Third, the East might offer the West (and also itself) some flexibility by proposing that, in addition to notifiable exercises and maneuvers, there be a certain number of "no-notice" exercises and movements each year.

Would such a bargain appeal to Soviet interests? That is difficult to say. Certainly for the Soviet Union, the first necessity will be to be frank with itself about the prospects. In the circumstances as these can be foreseen at present, it is unlikely that anything much beyond a bargain of this character would enjoy threshold credibility with the West. So far as confidence-building-type limitations are concerned, there is no escaping that fact.

### **STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVES**

This, however, still leaves a third broad option. On a few occasions in the recent past, the Soviet Union has suggested that both sides focus on cutting naval inventories as well as (or perhaps in lieu of) discussing informational measures and operational/presence limitations. Typically, Soviet proposals in this area have envisioned some kind of trade-off between Soviet submarines and U.S. aircraft carriers.<sup>10</sup> In September 1988, Akromeyev, complaining that the U.S. Navy's carrier strike force, "no matter how much people might try to convince us to the contrary, is incalculably greater

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<sup>10</sup>There is a second kind of structural proposal of the Soviet Union that has regularly been advanced in the START context: arrangements that would either ban entirely or strictly limit SLCMs, nuclear or conventional or both.



than is necessary to meet U.S. defense requirements," cryptically suggested that the Soviet Union would be willing to give up large numbers of submarines in return for some small number of U.S. CTOL carriers.

We . . . have (quite a few at that) multipurpose nuclear- and diesel powered submarines carrying missile and torpedo arms. We are asking the United States to start talks on the reduction of the sides' naval forces. This reduction will also cover these submarines of ours. As for the remaining forces of our Navy, they are basically for coastal operations and designed to defend our shores.<sup>11</sup>

In a formulation made public in February 1989 by U.S. Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks, Director of Naval Intelligence, the Soviets proposed trading 100 of their submarines in return for the United States taking out of service 5 to 7 aircraft carriers.<sup>12</sup> Predictably, the U.S. reaction was unreceptive. For one thing, the Soviet submarine inventory, while composed of capable units, has large numbers of nearly obsolete assets. In Brooks' words, the 100-for-7 swap is little more than "an offer to trade 100 submarines which they probably intend to scrap anyway for our taking out of service five to seven aircraft carriers, the very foundation of our security."<sup>13</sup> More important, of all the assets in the U.S. naval inventory that fit least comfortably within East-West arms control regimes, the CTOL carrier—in patterns of usage if not in unquestioned capability—is beyond doubt the most globally oriented, multimission, multifunctional, and multisenario and thus the least acceptable from a U.S. perspective for inclusion in a strictly East-West arms control regime.<sup>14</sup>

But if submarine-for-carrier tradeoffs remain undigestible for the West, they may also make less sense for the Soviet Union in the future. Noted earlier, the U.S. carrier strike force inventory will shrink, not grow, in the decade ahead. The only real question is by how much. In the Soviet calculation, it might be just as agreeable to allow events to run their own course.

This, nevertheless, leaves an alternative course. Although there is no evidence that the Soviet Union has seriously examined the possibility to date, it is plausible to imagine

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<sup>11</sup>*Pravda*, September 5, 1988; reprinted in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, September 6, 1988.

<sup>12</sup>"Statement on Intelligence Issues of Rear Admiral Thomas A. Brooks, USN, Director of Naval Intelligence, Before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee," February 22, 1989, p. 22; and "Soviet Naval Cutbacks Reported," *Washington Post*, February 23, 1989, p. A12.

<sup>13</sup>Brooks, *ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>14</sup>Recalling from Sec. II, of some 187 crisis/conflict instances in which the U.S. Navy has been dispatched since 1946, in fully 125 of them a carrier or carriers were part of the response.

a future Soviet analysis concluding that there is a better deal to be made for Soviet submarines than U.S. carriers: U.S. attack submarines. The Soviet Union enjoys a considerable numerical superiority in this area (depending upon what is counted, between 260 and 280 general purpose attack submarines to the U.S. 96). Unlike multimission, multipurpose carriers, the attack submarine inventories of the Soviet Union and the United States, in their numbers and capabilities, are rationalized chiefly in East-West security terms. Within broad bounds, fewer Soviet submarines should translate into a requirement for fewer U.S. submarines, and vice versa.

Suppose, then, that the Soviet leadership were to propose a steep, asymmetrical reduction in the attack (i.e., non-SSBN) submarine inventories of the two countries to, say, a common level of 50 or 60. Certainly the Soviet Union would be giving up more than it would be getting in return (at or greater than a 4:1 ratio). Yet, such an arrangement might not be as unfavorably one-sided from a Soviet perspective as it might seem. In reducing the U.S. attack submarine force by as much as half, the Soviet Union would also significantly reduce the magnitude of the U.S. SSN threat to the bastioned Soviet SSBN force, probably as effectively and perhaps more effectively than would ASW-free sanctuaries.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet Union might further calculate that, in surrendering so large a portion of its own submarine inventory (on the order of 200 to 220 hulls), much of the rest of the West's ASW capabilities (destroyers, corvettes, land- and sea-based air, and NATO-allied attack submarines) would gradually erode under a combination of fiscal pressures and diminished *raison d'etre*. The proposition would be relatively simple (with minimal to no qualitative qualifiers) and comparatively easy to verify (hulls would be destroyed or platforms otherwise rendered inoperable). For the Soviet Union, such a bargain would significantly reduce operating costs, but this is an argument that Moscow could make to tantalizing effect to Western capitals in terms of their own operating costs as well. Although difficult to estimate with precision, it is safe to suggest that two-thirds or more of all of NATO-Europe's naval expenditures are tied in one way or another to ASW and to ASW directly and exclusively concerned with only one threat: the Soviet attack submarine.

That such a proposition would immediately catch the attention of the West is not in doubt. But would the Soviet Union seriously entertain something so bold? Soviet naval analysts would almost certainly point to non-U.S. NATO's (NUSN) remaining

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<sup>15</sup>Unlike sanctuaries, which may fall to necessity and be breached in the event of war or acute crisis, submarines, once scuttled, would be impossible to replace in time of hostilities.

140+ attack submarines (compared to a non-Soviet Warsaw Pact total of seven) as an unacceptable remaining imbalance. When these other forces are taken into account, the two alliances, in a strictly quantitative sense at least, would seem to be already at rough parity. Soviet critics would also note that of the remaining major navies of the world, the more plentiful and capable submarine forces are not in the hands of Soviet friends and allies (see Fig. 1, earlier).

Still, a sober Soviet appraisal may not be discouraged by these considerations. Most of NATO's (indeed, most of the world's) submarine forces have limited-to-no true "blue-water" capabilities. In this, they are essentially defensive. That is, they are militarily significant chiefly in cases where one is penetrating their territorial seas and adjoining waters. Second, with respect to the few NUSN submarines of Soviet concern—chiefly, British, French, and German—the numbers are still relatively small enough so that some compensating formula, if needed, might be worked out with the West. Third, in a hard-headed Soviet calculation, the first and foremost security threat to the Soviet Union is still the U.S. SSN, backed by NATO's broader ASW capabilities. Pushing both the USSR and the United States into a more "defensive" posture in submarine/ASW warfare—as a steep reduction in inventories most certainly would do—comports with the Gorbachevian emphases on "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive orientation" in military orders of battle.

Indeed, a careful Soviet calculus might conclude that such an offering could agreeably be tied to a *quid pro quo* from the West. In exchange for such an asymmetrical cut in general purpose submarines, the Soviet Union might propose a mutual elimination of nonstrategic nuclear ordnance at sea. This, too, would sidestep most U.S. objections about capturing multipurpose assets in East-West arms control regimes. Like the attack submarine, nonstrategic nuclear weaponry at sea is almost entirely rationalized in East-West security terms.

### **SOVIET FUTURES, SOVIET CHOICES**

Returning to the Soviet problem noted at the beginning of this section, the nature of the Soviet difficulty, and the character of the possible answer, may be recast along two lines. In emphasizing naval confidence-building (writ large) as its major avenue of approach, the Soviet Union has been forced to play essentially to areas of U.S. strength. Though it can certainly refashion a more digestible menu of propositions, it still has little by way of *quid pro quo* to offer the West in this area. The United States, in turn, has no natural or obvious incentives to enter the game. On the other hand, in reaching beyond

limitations to inventories, the Soviet Union has the opportunity to play from its own strength. Its attack submarines are a genuine security concern to the West. It is precisely in putting its own strength on the negotiating table that the Soviet Union would seem to have its best hand to play in the West.

Apart from this kind of structural arrangement, it is not entirely clear from a narrow Soviet perspective that there is a good deal to be gained in the general naval area. When scrubbed for threshold acceptability in the West, the bulk of the Soviet Union's confidence-building propositions tend to fall into two categories: the trivial (manageable but inconsequential) and the troublesome (consequential but unmanageable). Paradoxically, recent political circumstances that make East-West naval confidence-building more imaginable than in times past may also make formal arrangements less relevant, less needed, and perhaps less desirable.

## VII. THINKING THROUGH U.S. OPTIONS

If some naval reductions can get us more than they're worth, we ought to be willing to consider talking. My view of the whole bloody mess is that there shouldn't be anything sacrosanct.

— Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., USN  
(Ret.), January 1990<sup>1</sup>

Most of the considerations that would logically form a part of future U.S. decision-making in this area have been touched upon, if only obliquely, in earlier sections and need not be revisited at great length here. The United States' position regarding naval matters entering the 1990s is the obverse of the Soviet Union's in nearly all respects, but the basic options are not fundamentally all that different. The United States may continue to hold the line at essentially a "no talks" policy, at least until such time as the Soviet Union becomes considerably more disciplined and specific about what it seeks in the naval arena, why it seeks it, and what it is prepared to settle for. Indeed, in the short run, this may be the only real option for the United States. Alternatively, the United States might seek to penetrate the maze of present Soviet offerings, with a view toward isolating manageable possibilities from unacceptable ideas and pursuing the former while drawing its "no talks" line more discretely around the latter. Analytically, this is not that difficult a task. In reality, however, the attempt could be hazardous, precisely because of the absence of any seeming limit on Soviet ambitions in this area. Third, of course, like the Soviet Union, the United States could look to change the character and content of the discussion entirely, by moving beyond confidence-building to a review of structural alternatives.

### HOLDING THE LINE

For many in the West, concerns about stepping onto a very slippery slope once general naval subjects are opened for discussion argue against even small concessions in the naval sphere. In this view, the line has been properly drawn at "no dice"; Pandora's box should be left alone. For others, the game is simply not worth the candle. They argue that there is nothing (or nothing important) that the West wants in naval limitations. To enter this sphere, in this view, would not produce negotiations but an uncongenial and

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<sup>1</sup>"Crowe Suggests New Approach on Naval Nuclear Arms Cuts," *Washington Post*, January 8, 1990, p. A1.

open-ended grab for concessions. Others point out that there is vastly more at stake than East-West security issues. The United States has invested heavily in its naval forces. This has been done, not only with the Soviet threat in view, but also with the misbehavior of other states in mind. Given the rich diversity of missions for which U.S. naval forces may be called upon, there is nothing, in this view, that the United States might prudently part with.

These concerns can be (and have been) overstated to be sure, but they are well grounded nevertheless. The Soviet Union has not presented the United States a menu for negotiation, but an undisciplined bouquet of aspirations. With the Soviets thus far unwilling or unable to draw their own lines, it is scarcely surprising that the West would worry whether there are any lines at all. But lines are difficult to locate in any case. Beyond particular Soviet offerings, there are enduring uncertainties, not only about how various confidence-building propositions would actually work, but also about the purposes various schemes would serve. That such uncertainties are grounded in more than technical anxieties was strongly suggested in Sec. III.

Yet if it is tempting to dismiss the whole area as confused, largely irrelevant, and overweighted with potential problems, it is also abundantly evident that not everything the Soviet Union has thus far proposed in this area is objectionable, or objectionable to the same degree and in the same ways. Indeed, some of these ideas (though differently formulated) were advanced by the United States itself at times in the past. At the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva in 1962, for example, the U.S. proposal regarding the "reduction of the risk of war through accident, miscalculation, or failure of communication" included several measures that could be "placed in operation prior to the implementation of a disarmament program that might help bring about conditions under which such a program might more rapidly be achieved." Among these measures were: notification seven days in advance of major military maneuvers and movements, including naval surface forces and aircraft flights; a "clearing-house" to disseminate exchanged information; observation posts at principal ports and airfields and "occasional visits to transportation centers where no posts were permanently located;" and aerial observation.

Moreover, as the discussion in the preceding section served to illustrate, it is risky (or at least premature) to assume that the Soviet Union will stay on its present track. It may, but it does have additional options—both to discipline its traditional proposals in ways that would be arguably more acceptable to the West and to imaginatively redefine the nature of the debate by reaching beyond traditional offerings. With this in mind, a

U.S. posture that begins and ends with "nothing doing" could pose risks of its own if carried too rigidly into the future. For one thing, NATO's own consensus on drawing the "firebreak at water's edge"—that is, resisting anything that might capture naval forces beyond the limited terms of Stockholm—may be more fragile than is currently assumed. Naval CSBMs have long been attractive, and "offensive" naval strategies along the lines of the U.S. "maritime strategy" have long been troublesome to a number of NATO allies, especially in the north. It is not hard to imagine a more sensible set of Soviet proposals, introduced at Vienna or elsewhere, driving a wedge in the West. For the United States, an open split among the Western allies on naval negotiating policy would be an unhappy development even if it did not spill over into other areas.

For another thing, though it is reasonable to question whether the balance at any negotiating table is so lopsided as to make a sensible deal very difficult, it is hard to make a persuasive case that the United States and the Soviet Union have nothing useful to talk about in the naval domain or that the United States has nothing to gain. Informational measures may be, at bottom, simply another form of espionage; but this cuts, or can be made to cut, both ways. Notifications and limitations applied to naval exercises, though providing the West nothing of value as presently formulated by the Soviet Union, nevertheless could be reformulated such that, as in Crowe's formulation above, they "get us more than they're worth." Coupling such "transparencies" in Western naval movements with insistence upon some form of "open skies" observation of Soviet homewater and land-based naval exercises could form the shape of a bargain in Vienna. Beyond this, as observed in Sec. II and illustrated in the last section, not all asymmetries in naval forces conclusively favor the West. In particular, the Soviet submarine threat has been a genuine security concern to the United States since the late 1940s.

What, then, does this suggest about U.S. options entering the 1990s? To lurch from a blanket "no" to an unstructured "yes" is certainly no option. Nor, given understandable concerns about "slippery slopes," is ad-hoc-ery through the possibilities a rational avenue of approach. Though the observations that follow hardly define a framework, they do suggest several benchmarks that might be useful for both discussion and subsequent policymaking.

#### **WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE?**

There are, to be sure, a number of rational criteria that would be the same whatever the subject. In judging possibilities in this area, the United States would need to ask three (largely obvious, though not always easily answered) questions. Does what is

contemplated or proposed (1) enhance U.S. security, (2) lend itself to crisis stability, and (3) conserve, or at least not require the expenditure of large additions of, resources? To take these primary considerations further, rational policy would require that anything in the naval sphere be: (1) mutually beneficial (not only as a matter of equity and strategic balance, but also to reasonably ensure that all sides have incentives to agree and comply), (2) workable, (3) verifiable, (4) understandable, and (5) durable over time.

These are largely givens. Yet, in reflecting on considerations discussed in earlier sections, several other narrowing principles seem to apply with particular relevance to the naval sphere. First, precisely because of the global character of U.S. (and to a lesser extent, other Western) naval operations, it would be essential for the United States that anything covered in East-West naval discussions directly (if not exclusively) correspond to East-West security interests. This has already been suggested in somewhat different terms in the preceding section. As a matter of negotiating policy, it would mean a conscious and consistent policy to avoid capturing in East-West discussions or arrangements multifunctional naval assets and nonrelevant missions.

Second, naval arrangements would need, for the most part, to stand on their own terms. For the reasons advanced in Sec. III, this will be very difficult to do without risk of creating potentially larger and more worrisome strategic imbalances in various regions of the world. Yet trading concessions in naval forces for arrangements covering other forces and activities almost certainly requires the use of arbitrary formulas. There may be ways to loosely link separate tracks together or to employ movement on one track as rough leverage on or inducement for progress in another, but linkages that are any more precise or explicit than generalized accommodation across mediums and forums are likely to be too difficult to manage technically, and too difficult to defend politically.<sup>2</sup>

Third, as noted in an earlier section, there are potential overlaps between naval arms control and the law and politics of the sea. This is especially the case when the subject of naval arrangements is limitations on presence or operations. True, the points of overlap between the two worlds are indeterminate, and the meaning of "unwanted precedent" is indefinite. Moreover, though a cherished principle in the West, "freedom of navigation" is not and has never been an absolute. But if the observation suggests guidance that is mostly cautionary rather than prescriptive, the animating concern is real nevertheless.

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<sup>2</sup>One can, of course, imagine cross-medium arrangements that would be simply too appealing to pass up—say, 10 Soviet divisions in exchange for one or two carriers—but all this says is that what is generally unacceptable may be made acceptable given extraordinary terms.



A fourth requirement for U.S. policy is that arrangements in the naval sphere would need to be acceptable to allies. This sounds simple and indisputable enough. Yet, recalling the ambiguities of regional confidence-building propositions in Sec. III, it can be a fiercely narrowing criterion. Naval power and its uses are military matters, to be sure, but they contain large elements of politics and psychology as well. Finally, above all else, the United States will quite naturally insist upon a very large flexibility for entering a decade in which not only are most of the familiar ground rules no longer applicable, but the strategical and political ground itself is shifting as well.

### **UNILATERAL MEASURES**

The sum of the foregoing may seem like a recipe to do nothing. Certainly when one arrays the range of naval propositions advanced by the Soviet Union and others against the cumulative thrust of these rough guidelines, what emerges at the other end is bound to be small (or at least very different) in comparison. What may be most important, however, is not that the particular options are fewer, but precisely that they are different.

In this vein, it is important to introduce another element. Though to speculate on where the Soviet Union will be one year hence, let alone five or ten, is a fool's gamble, it does not appear to be in the long-term interest of the United States to leave Moscow entirely unrequited in its naval concerns or to skip casually by its general complaints of imbalance and unfairness. The East and West positions on naval CSBMs in Vienna are fundamentally different, but, as discussed in the preceding section, the differences do not appear to be beyond bridging. U.S. policymakers may well conclude that the United States really does not gain anything of military or strategic value in any plausibly imagined Vienna compromise, but Soviet policymakers may well reach the same conclusion themselves, and for both, the game may still be worth the candle. If the most serious drawback of much of naval confidence-building is that it is more perception and psychology than realistically manageable arrangements, then agreements whose value is chiefly symbolic may fit the bill precisely.

To push the point further, the general outlines of a larger bargain in the naval sphere can be visualized. The bargain would have to be rough and mostly implicit—more political than formal, more tacit than negotiated. If, as seems inevitable, the United States will continue to have a comparative advantage over the Soviet Union in the naval sphere, it also seems logical for the United States to assume a greater burden of self-restraint in the deployments and operations of its naval forces. This seems likely in any

case, but it may serve larger purposes to explicitly acknowledge it within U.S. policy. So long as the United States is not bound by explicit agreements to do or not do certain things, it has enormous flexibility to spread "confidence" (admittedly a difficult concept) through symbolism. The forms such symbolism might take are varied. Large exercises might be held less frequently, or further removed from areas of particular sensitivity to the Soviet Union, or unilaterally announced in advance, or accompanied by invitations for Soviet observers. That this may begin to sound like sweetness and motherhood is not fatal. More likely to be fatal are attempts to reduce symbolic gestures to negotiations and binding parchment.

### **RETHINKING THE SUBJECT**

The shape of a bargain might materialize in one other area as well. The benchmarks of acceptability suggested above are no less narrowing when applied to structural than to confidence-building possibilities in the naval sphere. Yet, two dimensions would seem to have a continuing and compelling logic in East-West terms. The first is the world of submarine and antisubmarine warfare. That the Soviet Union might conclude that the potential in negotiating sharp reductions in submarine inventories outweighs the drawbacks from a narrow Soviet perspective, scarcely precludes the West from reaching a similar judgment of its own. The broad outlines of such an arrangement were sketched in the preceding section. The second is similarly cast. Nonstrategic nuclear weaponry at sea, like the attack submarine, is rationalized almost entirely in East-West security terms.

## VIII. THE LEGACY AND THE OPTIONS

All of us who see far ahead must, in the words of Leo Tolstoy, identify not only the importance of where we stand but also that of the direction in which we are moving.

— Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, January 1989<sup>1</sup>

Where, then, from here? The question asks for a prediction, but predictions are a fool's gamble given the unsettled state of Soviet-U.S. and intra-European relationships entering the 1990s. It is certainly possible to describe the state of affairs in the naval sphere at the end of 1989 as one of basic deadlock. The Soviet Union does not seem to be able to find anything wrong with naval negotiations as it (and others) have variously suggested them, and the United States can find nothing right. For the Soviet Union, the major avenue of approach has been naval confidence-building, but with a vastly expansive perception of what this implies.

Specific Soviet propositions aside, however, it is difficult to consider most things proposed under the confidence-building banner without a sense of abiding uneasiness. Confidence-building measures are answers, but whether they are good answers, and whether there are even good questions to which they might be addressed, are neither self-evident nor matters of natural assurance. Conceptions of naval power implicit in many formulations are not always clear, but they are not always balanced or current or complete, either. In an open exchange of letters with Albert Einstein on the topic "why war?" in 1932, Sigmund Freud argued that it was possible to combat the "war spirit by indirect means."<sup>2</sup> As an approach to naval limitations, confidence-building measures, too, are indirect means. But are they useful and dependable means? The examination in the early sections of this Note is not tending in the direction of optimism.

One key deficiency is the tendency in this area to blur arguably sensible steps that governments might be inclined to take unilaterally and tacitly with notions of negotiation and binding arrangements. Formal arrangements may give mutual undertakings a greater sense of definiteness (though this not self-evident), but they are equally as likely to get in

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<sup>1</sup>E. Shevardnadze, *Address to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, Vienna, January 19, 1989.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Paul A. Carter, *Another Part of the Twenties*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1977, p. 39.

the way. In part, this is because of the widely undervalued complexity of much in this area—many things are simply too difficult to reduce to formal negotiations and verifiable regimes. In part, it is simply because it is easier—and often more prudent—for governments to do in fact what they would otherwise find unacceptable if done as a matter of explicit (and binding) commitment.

In the Soviet case in particular, perhaps the largest deficiency has been to confuse ritualism with relevance and political meddling with arguably plausible security concerns. The Soviet Union has been pushing many of its current propositions for so long that there is reason to question whether, from its own narrow perspective, it has much of a grasp of their present and future value. But the United States may also be carrying too much of the (recent) past into its own perceptions. Following a decade of relatively steep post-Vietnam decline in U.S. naval forces, the 1980s were the decade of the Navy. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s the United States was at times open to discussions of some kinds of naval limitations, the 1980s were the decade of “no how, no way.” This is understandable, but it is part of the legacy, not necessarily a sensible part of the future.

One outcome in the period ahead would be more of the same. This will be tempting (indeed, it will be somewhat logical) in the case of the United States, so long as the Soviet Union stays on its present track. It may be less appealing to the Soviet Union, however, precisely because the track it is on does not seem to lead in a very happy direction. In any case, as suggested in the later sections above, more of the same need not be the only course. When looked at closely, naval confidence-building measures tend to fall into one of two categories: the manageable but marginal, and the unmanageable and unacceptable. This still leaves room for modest accommodations that may be helpful even if inconvenient. Beyond confidence-building, the prospects are certainly fewer in number, but bolder in conception and potential impacts.

## IX. AFTERWORD

On February 6–10, 1990, in Moscow, the Soviet Union sponsored the “International Seminar on the Problems of Naval Arms Limitations and Naval Activities Reduction.” Among the papers presented at the seminar was one by the author (App. A) that embodied a number of ideas discussed in this Note. The initial Soviet reaction to suggestions that the Soviet Union might profitably change course in its approach to naval negotiations was unmistakably negative. This is not the time, one Soviet after another said, for large and provocative cuts in naval inventories. It is the time for confidence-building measures. Though there were some minor concessions that perhaps the Soviet Union has made too many different proposals in this area, the current Soviet course, as described by Andrey Granovsky of the Directorate of Arms Control and Disarmament Issues, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (App. B), is ample and correct.

**Appendix A**

**"IF THE SOVIET UNION IS SERIOUS ABOUT NAVAL ARMS CONTROL"**

**Paper Presented at the International Seminar  
on Naval Disarmament, Moscow, February 9, 1990,  
by James L. Lacy<sup>1</sup>**

Marshal Akromeyev forcefully and correctly directed his remarks yesterday at the United States. I would like, in the same spirit, to address my remarks to the Soviet Union—because it seems to me that the Soviet Union holds a very important set of keys to any future negotiations in this area.

With your leave, I would like to do three things:

1. Review the situation as it now exists and is likely to continue to exist so long as the Soviet Union maintains its present approach to naval arms control.
2. Give you one analyst's assessment of why so much that the Soviet Union proposes in this area falls on deaf ears in the United States.
3. Suggest steps that the Soviet Union could take if it is serious about engaging the West in discussions about naval reductions and limitations.

I speak only as a private citizen. The analysis I provide is my own.

I. Let me start with a candid assessment of where we are at present. There are five factors of note.

First, in the past three years, the Soviet leadership has vigorously promoted a wide-ranging agenda of proposals for naval limitations. These have not been confined to any one subject or subjects, to any one region, or to any particular forum for discussion and negotiation. They have consisted of four broad types of measures:

1. *Informational*, both static and dynamic, including notifications and observations of exercises and maneuvers.
2. *Navigational* rules of the road, along the lines of Incident-at-Sea (INCSEA) agreements.

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<sup>1</sup>The views expressed in this paper are wholly those of the author, and not of RAND, the U.S. government, or any other agency or organization.

3. Various *operational* constraints, ranging from limits on the size, frequency, location, and duration of exercises to strategic antisubmarine warfare (ASW) sanctuaries.
4. *Presence limitations* that seek to restrict or prohibit naval presence and deployments in international waters, including but not limited to nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs).

The Soviet Union has been advancing some of these proposals for over 30 years. In 1957 it made the first in a recurring series of proposals for naval disengagement in the Mediterranean. In 1958, Nikolai Bulganin made the first in a long series of proposals for an NWFZ in the Nordic region. In the years following, the Soviet Union proposed naval disengagements, zones of peace, and NWFZs in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, the Baltic, and elsewhere. During SALT-II in the 1970s, the first Soviet proposals to ban or limit sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) were heard.

Throughout this 30-plus year period, only one concrete general purpose naval force agreement—the U.S.-Soviet INCSEA in 1972—was signed, and this was a U.S. initiative first proposed to the Soviet Union by the United States in 1967. Throughout this 30-plus year period, incidentally, though the Soviet and U.S. navies have operated in a number of crisis situations within firing range of each other, no shots have been fired, and no cataclysmic incidents have occurred.

Second, though Soviet public diplomacy in this area has intensified since 1986, very little has changed. The Soviet leadership has given interviews and made many speeches, but except for CDE<sup>2</sup> in Vienna, it has not managed to acquire a forum for negotiation. In CDE, Soviet success has been limited. The East's naval CSBM<sup>3</sup> proposal has not won the endorsement of any of the neutral and non-aligned (NNA) participants, who last June tabled their own narrowly drawn proposal. The NATO/West proposal, in keeping with the Madrid Mandate requirement for a functional link, does not discuss navies at all.

Third, except for START, U.S./NATO continues to express disinterest in entering any naval discussions with the Soviet Union, now or in the foreseeable future.

Fourth, there is no groundswell of movement around the world to rally behind Soviet naval proposals. There are occasional resolutions and declarations calling for zones of peace and NWFZs, but declarations are cheap and easily made. In the Pacific,

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<sup>2</sup>Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

<sup>3</sup>Confidence- and Security-Building Measure.

Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, and the Mediterranean, there remain a number of countries who are suspicious of Soviet ideas and Soviet motives.

Fifth, the world is changing. In the naval sphere, the decade ahead will not be one of renaissance for the Soviet or U.S. navies. Political events and fiscal pressures will compact both the structure and the operations of the two navies. Moreover, naval activities of the two which one or the other may have found provocative in years past may, in a period of extended détente, be viewed as benign or even helpful. Here, it would seem, there is a paradox. The convergence of political and military developments that makes discussion of naval matters between the two countries more imaginable now than in times past may, paradoxically, make formal naval arrangements less needed, less relevant, and less desirable.

To sum up the situation in short, the record of accomplishment after 30 years of recurring Soviet proposals in the naval sphere is conspicuously slim. The Soviet approach, still unchanged 30 years into this area, has little to show for the effort.

II. This brings me to my second point. Why is the West not more receptive to naval negotiations? Marshal Akromeyev suggested yesterday that it is because U.S./NATO seeks military superiority over the East. In deference to Marshal Akromeyev, I would suggest that the reasons lie elsewhere. Let me suggest five.

First, the current Soviet naval agenda is simply too sweeping, hydra-headed, and unfocused. The Soviet Union has yet to articulate what it truly wants in this area, why, in what order of priority, and what it can do without. The Soviet leadership has cast so many lines with so many different lures that it is difficult for anyone in the West to guess what exactly it is fishing for, or whether it seriously expects a catch at all. This raises questions in Western minds about Soviet genuineness in this area.

Second, much that the Soviet Union advances mixes together a small number of propositions that have a plausible military content with a wider array of proposals that are almost entirely political in content—all under the banner of naval CSBMs. Certainly, in a zero-sum game, anything that complicates the operations of the U.S. Navy may be said to enhance Soviet security. Yet, it is precisely the mischievous political character of many Soviet proposals that spur negative reactions in the West. For the U.S. to agree to announce presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard ships whenever they make port calls, for example—a common Soviet proposal—would surely complicate U.S. fleet operations. Yet, it would be difficult to make a case that any immediate or real Soviet security interest is at stake in making such a proposal, or that Soviet confidence and



security are somehow enhanced. The same can be said for most operational constraints and presence limitations in areas beyond the Soviet Union's "maritime frontiers." The proposals sound like the Soviet Union is merely playing to the balcony, mischievously, and without serious interest in actual negotiations with the West.

Third, the navies are different. The asymmetries are important. The Soviet navy is still predominately a submarine force with a powerful land-based aviation element. U.S. naval air is almost entirely on its carriers. In the classic formulation, the Soviet navy is geared to exercise sea denial; the U.S. Navy, to sea control. Yet Soviet naval arms control proposals, like those tabled at CDE in Vienna, while putatively balanced, in fact take no account of such asymmetries. On their face, they aim only to capture, complicate, and constrain U.S. naval forces. As presently cast, they are one-sided in formulation and lopsided in implication. This merely fuels resistance in the West.

Fourth, it is difficult to understand what a number of Soviet proposals actually mean, or indeed whether the ideas have been fully thought through. Take, for example, ASW sanctuaries. It would certainly be in the Soviet interest to secure from the West an ASW-free sanctuary for Soviet ballistic missile submarines, but how would such an arrangement work? For one thing, it would require unparalleled, unprecedented, and barely imaginable levels of cooperation between the superpowers. Second, it would invariably involve a whole host of third countries, who would also have to curtail operations and transits in and near such areas. Third, it would mean that either only the Soviet Union got a sanctuary, or that the United States would have to change 30 years of deployment policy, rein in to a small area its own SSBNs, and announce to the Soviet Union and the world where U.S. SSBNs were now located and bastioned. Putting aside that this last would always be unacceptable to the United States, if, hypothetically, the U.S. ever agreed to such a thing, U.S. confidence in the survivability of its own strategic retaliatory force would invariably erode, leading to a more, not less, destabilizing circumstance in times of crisis.

Or take again the many Soviet proposals to draw lines in the oceans—stand-off areas, keep-out zones, and the like. What would these mean? What would happen if a ship strayed into one of these areas? Would the areas be treated as if they were territorial waters? Would the ship be subject to seizure, firing upon, merely a diplomatic protest? Would these areas not amount to a backdoor extension of jurisdictional claims to the high seas, a clear contravention of the 1982 UN Convention, and how would this fit with Soviet, let alone U.S., interests in freedom of navigation?

Last, Soviet formulations aside, and once beyond information exchanges, naval confidence-building is extremely complex, difficult to arrange (particularly as more and more parties must be involved), difficult (and probably very expensive) to verify and, most importantly, invariably transitory. Let me add emphasis to the last point. Keep-out zones, keep-in zones, sanctuaries, thin-out areas, and the like are purely peacetime measures; they do not endure the firing of the first shot. In this sense, they are more a matter of peacetime aesthetics than of genuine security. Drawing lines in the oceans does not eliminate or reduce a single naval weapon. Because any sensible nation would have to assume that such lines would be automatically breached at the point of hostilities, such measures provide at best a limp, and deceptive, sense of confidence and security.

III. Let me turn, then, to the last of my three points. Where to from here? In my personal estimation, the United States is not likely to come forward with naval initiatives of its own in the period ahead, nor react any more positively to the current bouquet of Soviet proposals than it has up to now. So long as the Soviet Union continues its current approach and presents blustery bouquets rather than discrete menus for negotiation, I cannot foresee a change in the West's generally negative reaction.

This, however, is not a prescription for failure. I began by mentioning that the Soviet Union itself holds important keys to progress in this area. It seems to me that there are two promising directions that the Soviet Union, if serious about making progress, would want to seriously consider. The first is modest; the second is bold.

Let me begin with the modest approach. In my assessment, Soviet proposals for naval limitations are more likely to be acceptable in the West if they conform to the following criteria.

1. The forces and activities covered correspond plausibly and directly to East-West security interests (that is, they do not wander into political and geographical areas unrelated to strict security interests, or seek to capture and constrain nonrelevant assets and activities).
2. The arrangements sought are truly balanced and mutually beneficial, given the very clear asymmetries between the two sides' naval forces, operations, and commitments to third parties.
3. Proposals in this area avoid potentially unhappy precedents regarding freedom of navigation and the law of the sea.

4. The arrangements sought are simple in execution and verifiable in implementation.
5. The propositions advanced avoid radical solutions involving radical departures from current practices and policies (to truly enhance stability, we must be able to assure allies and other third parties in various regions no less than each other; this is scarcely the time in world history for radical shocks).
6. Participation in such arrangements should be less rather than more, and arrangements less rather than more formal.

This would reduce the Soviet agenda to a more modest, but also a more manageable and potentially more negotiable menu. It would emphasize information-sharing, to encourage both navies to be more forthcoming about the size, structure, and activities of their forces. It most certainly could include various types of notifications and observations. What it clearly would not include are presence limitations or radical operational and deployment constraints.

It would mean certain logical adjustments in the East's naval proposal in Vienna, but these are not that difficult to conceive. At present, the notification thresholds proposed by the Soviet Union capture only U.S./NATO naval exercises—not a single Soviet exercise would be affected—a point which, I might add, the United States Navy emphasizes with powerful effect whenever it briefs the United States Congress on naval arms control. But this is fixable, if the Soviet Union is prepared to do so. The notification thresholds could be adjusted so that fewer Western exercises are affected, or better, the Soviet Union could propose, as part of a CDE deal, an open-skies arrangement such that the West could observe exercises and maneuvers involving Soviet land-based naval aviation (the Backfire), Soviet installation support, and exercises in Soviet home waters.

Second, the Soviet Union could reduce much Western opposition by simply acknowledging that, of "Europe's waters," the Mediterranean is fundamentally different and needs to be treated differently. It is Europe's southern flank, but it is also the meeting point of three continents, with its own delicate power balances, regional interests, and requirements for reassurance. This, too, is not an insurmountable problem for CDE. The East's proposal might simply be adjusted to provide for exceptions or certain kinds of flexibilities with regard to naval exercises, transfers, and maneuvers in this distinctive body of water.

Third, precisely because we are at a point of profound but unpredictable change in East-West relations, future flexibility should be important to the Soviet Union no less than the United States. This, too, could be accommodated in the Soviet proposal in Vienna. In addition to some number of notified exercises, for example, the Soviet Union might propose some additional number of "no-notice" exercises per year in order to preserve that element of flexibility.

I mentioned that there was also a bold option available to the Soviet Union. Let me turn to this now. Thus far, Soviet proposals in the naval area have been almost entirely directed against U.S. naval strength. This is understandable, but also self-defeating. It provides no incentives to the United States which, equally understandably, sees nothing to gain in such naval arrangements. A different approach would be for the Soviet Union to play from its own strength. In the past, Marshal Akromeyev and others have suggested some submarine-for-carrier trade-off. This has been rejected by the United States on a number of grounds. I am sure it will continue to be rejected. But there is an alternative that could not be so easily dismissed in the West—a proposal by the Soviet Union to trade general-purpose submarines for general-purpose submarines. At present the Soviet Union has between 260 and 280 attack submarines; the U.S. has approximately 100. Suppose the Soviet Union were to propose that both sides reduce to a common ceiling of, say, 50 or 60. The arrangement could be made strikingly simple. Each could retain, in its own judgment, its best 50. Excess attack submarines would be either eliminated entirely through scuttling, or otherwise made effectively inoperable in easily verifiable circumstances. In place of drawing lines of no consequence in the oceans, the proposal would cut to the quick, and begin a radical reduction in naval arsenals. The attack submarine is a natural in this case. Of all the assets in each side's naval inventories, it is most clearly and directly rationalized in East-West security terms. Unlike the multipurpose carrier, it performs very few and minor missions that are not related to East-West security.

What would such a proposition do? In my view, it would do several things that should be of interest to the Soviet Union no less than the West.

1. A Soviet proposal to eliminate approximately four of its attack submarines for every one in the United States would electrify the world; it would have to be taken seriously.

2. While numerically the Soviet Union would be giving up more, it is important to keep an eye on what it would be getting in return—a 40 to 50 percent cut in the U.S. SSN inventory.
3. With so substantial a drop in the Soviet attack submarine threat, much of the West's other ASW capabilities would almost certainly erode under fiscal pressures and diminished rationale.
4. At such a reduced level, both attack submarine forces would be placed in a more defensive orientation. This would be perfectly consistent with reasonable sufficiency. There would be fewer Soviet platforms to threaten the West's sea lines, and fewer U.S. SSNs to threaten Soviet SSBNs in their bastions. Unlike an ASW sanctuary, which has no durability, the effect in this case would be near-permanent.
5. It would vastly reduce operating costs for both sides, in terms both of the submarine platforms directly eliminated and the lessened requirements for other ASW.
6. It is simple, verifiable, and durable.
7. It would speak partly, albeit indirectly, to Soviet concerns about SLCMs as well; fewer submarine platforms should translate into fewer submarine-based SLCMs.

To be sure, such a proposition does not capture U.S. carriers, but U.S. carrier strength will decline in the 1990s in any case. The only question that is open concerns what the reduced carrier level will be, 5 and 10 years hence. The proposition also does not capture surface SLCMs. But, an unconditional proposal such as this would electrify the world. It would almost certainly pave the way for serious, subsequent negotiations about SLCMs and, more generally, nonstrategic nuclear weapons at sea.

As an analyst, I deal in options. I do not see any better, or more plausible options available in this area in the period ahead. Certainly, more of the same from the Soviet side will merely produce more of the same from the West. The result will not be worth mentioning.

There is a time to be modest and a time to be bold. Let me suggest to my Soviet friends that in this area, this may well be the time to be both. Thank you.

**Appendix B**

**ANDREY GRANOVSKY, USSR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
ON SOVIET PERSPECTIVES OF NAVAL ARMS CONTROL  
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 8, 1990**

**Speech by A.E. Granovsky, Directorate of Arms Control and  
Disarmament Issues, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup>**

As has been noted in several of the speeches, the time to begin negotiations on naval forces has arrived.

The surmounting of military confrontation, disarmament, and the strengthening of trust in the military realm must be comprehensive and embrace all basic services of the armed forces.

If we do not include this important channel of the arms race along with the others, such as SNV (strategic offensive forces), conventional forces in Europe, and chemical weapons, then this will inevitably lead to an arms race, especially a qualitative one, in the world's oceans. In this instance, a shift from an abundance of arms (overarmament) to reasonable sufficiency for defense will simply not occur.

Under the conditions of radical reductions of conventional weapons in Europe, a naval arms race is particularly destabilizing. The proportion and significance of naval forces in the overall military potential of states and alliances is increasing just as radically as the significance of asymmetries in this area. Therefore, excluding them [naval forces] from the disarmament process would contradict the generally agreed-upon principle of preserving both sides' security and undermine military-strategic stability in the world.

The Soviet Union put forth a whole series of detailed proposals concerning the reduction of military confrontation and the strengthening of security and stability in the world's oceans. It is not appropriate to enumerate all of them here, especially because there is not enough time. Therefore, I would like to think out loud about possible paths for developing dialogue in the naval sphere, on the basis of the proposals made by the USSR and other countries.

The USSR is proposing that the combat composition and structure of the fleets be bound exclusively by the requirements of reasonable sufficiency for defense.

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<sup>1</sup>English translation by Sally W. Stoecker, RAND, February 24, 1990.

At the same time, we understand the complexity of this task and suggest that it be approached gradually, beginning with the most simple measures of trust and strengthening of stability at sea which contain certain elements of mutual understanding.

It may be possible to enter into discussion of naval forces, for example, in special consultations with the participation of all interested states and above all, naval powers. In the course of the consultations, they would discuss mutual concerns in this area, and also would exchange views on the mechanism, format, and ultimate goals of future negotiations and how to reach them gradually.

In such consultations it would be possible to exchange data on naval forces' potential, examine and compare the structure of naval forces, the assignment of those or other arms, the correlation of various functional components of fleets, the principles and plans of the employment of naval forces among the naval powers, and their overall naval strategies, and the direction of their training exercises and maneuvers, etc.

In my view, in the context of substantial differences in geographical situations, military-political and operational concepts, and in accordance with the military technical policy of these states, such a broad doctrinal discussion is useful, and possibly even a necessary impetus to substantive discussion by means of concrete steps beyond the framework of measures of trust; that is, according to the measures of the limitation and reduction of naval forces, their weapons, and activities.

In the course of such consultations, it would be possible to conduct an inventory of regional and global problems in the area of naval arms control, prioritize those and other tasks, and solve them using a combination of multilateral, intrabloc, bilateral, global, and regional approaches.

In our opinion, the final objective of naval forces negotiations must be the strengthening of stability at sea, the elimination of the threat of surprise attack at sea, and the limitation of naval forces' capability to conduct large-scale offensive operations.

Considering the objective complexity of naval arms control problems and the political-psychological difficulties of some western countries regarding this question, it is clear that it would be expedient to limit measures of trust and openness first. Such measures would affect neither the structure and composition of the existing naval forces, nor the construction and modernization programs. At the same time, they would significantly increase the stability and predictability of the situation at sea, eliminate mutual suspicion, and minimize the danger of incorrectly interpreting or mistakenly responding to the other side's actions.

The most simple measure of trust is the agreement on the prevention of incidents at sea, which clearly demonstrated its effectiveness. The practice of such agreements should be developed in the future. In Vienna we are proposing to conclude a multilateral agreement in the framework of CSCE on the measures of preventing incidents in the waters bordering Europe and the air space above it. Perhaps it would even make sense to think about a similar agreement between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Sweden's idea of concluding a global, multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents is interesting.

At the same time, for all of its effectiveness, these agreements determine, in my view, the rules of conduct between separate vessels, rather than between navies in general.

Measures of trust in the area of naval forces in general, might include, above all, notification of large-scale exercises, concentrations, and deployments, the presence of observers at naval exercises and maneuvers, and also the areas of their conduct, contacts between navies, including a regular exchange of ship and naval aircraft visits and other measures focused on overcoming the "enemy image."

Above all, those exercises and maneuvers which include ground operations and large redeployments of naval forces, including naval infantry, which have the capacity to conduct surprise attacks must be included in the measures.

An annual exchange of detailed information on naval forces and their construction plans would significantly strengthen trust and openness. It would be useful to agree on all of this during the first phase of the negotiations. In this way, measures could also be worked out either on a global scale immediately, or for separate regions if they approve, and later spread to other regions of the world.

An effective step toward averting military accidents at sea would be negotiations on containing naval activities in areas of crisis or tension and also on establishing principles and rules of mandatory withdrawal of fleets from areas where armed conflict erupts. It is also necessary to work out a system of special consultations which would take place in the event of tensions at sea, at the level of operational command of those fleets directly or indirectly drawn into such a situation.

Simultaneously, it may be possible to work out a system to guarantee the security of international commercial shipping either on a global or initially a regional level.

Such a system could include international measures against terrorism at sea, including an international convention on this score, the prohibition of exercises and maneuvers in the regions of intensive nonmilitary activity, such as commercial shipping,



fishing, resource extraction and the conduct of scientific research, and also the prevention of concentrations of large groups of naval forces above agreed-upon levels.

There is a real opportunity and need to work out the rules and procedures for joint naval actions in repulsing untraditional threats occurring outside of the context of East-West military confrontation. Here I have in mind the danger of violations of the normal functioning of sea routes, narcotic trade, terrorism, and ecological disasters.

One form of such cooperation proposed by the Soviet Union could be the creation of an "ad hoc" United Nations navy.

An important measure of openness would be the agreement among nuclear powers to announce the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board their ships entering foreign ports. In order to ensure that such an agreement will be observed, we propose working out the technical means of determining whether or not nuclear weapons are aboard ships together with the interested countries.

At the same time it may be possible in the first phase, along with measures of trust, openness, and cooperation, to agree on radical cuts and then the full liquidation of naval nuclear arms (except SLBMs, which are the topic of Soviet-American START negotiations). The Soviet side put forth this proposal during the U.S.-Soviet Summit meeting in Malta. This measure, effectively controlled, would significantly raise the threshold of nuclear war and thereby strengthen stability at sea.

On the next level, a series of measures should be agreed upon regarding the limitation of especially dangerous naval activities, the reduction of the threat of surprise attack from the sea, the capabilities of navies to participate in operations on land, and the employment of large-scale offensive actions at sea.

In our view, this will be possible to do by means of quantitative and geographic limitations. Among the quantitative ones, it is possible to consider limiting and reducing forces and means for attacks against targets on shore and the capture of territory, including aircraft carriers, cruise missile carriers, amphibious forces, naval deck-landing, and base aviation.

In order to observe the principle of preserving security, these reductions must be undertaken hand in hand with reductions in numbers of multipurpose submarines with nuclear engines and with radical limitations on their activities at great distances from their own shores.

As far as geographical limitations are concerned, it may be possible to discuss, for example, the creation of "clear" ocean zones that are "off limits" to offensive forces and means, in keeping with the principle of free navigation. Another step would be to limit

operations geared toward the destruction of SSBNs, including the prevention of antisubmarine activities in mutually agreed-upon areas of the ocean. It may also be possible to agree that ships carrying nuclear weapons and SLCMs, as well as aircraft carriers, be constrained from nearing the shores of other countries according to the range of their on-board nuclear systems and deck-landing aircraft, except in the case of notification (i.e., the ships must keep a distance from the shore equal to the range of their shipboard missiles and aircraft).

It would also be desirable to establish effective means of controlling the proliferation of naval arms and its related technology.

Finally, at a more advanced stage of the negotiations it may be possible to completely realize the ultimate goal—the creation of a situation in which the composition, armaments, and force structure of naval forces would be limited by the requirements for the defense of their shores and coastal communications, but would not be sufficient to conduct offensive operations.

It goes without saying that the solution of this difficult problem requires us to jointly work out the criteria for a strictly defensive posture of the navy and parameters and limits on naval activities and arms, according to the principles of reasonable sufficiency for defense.

In accordance with the agreed-upon criteria, it may be possible to reduce symmetrically the quantity of combat ships of the basic classes of the largest naval powers in keeping with agreed-upon proportions. This would completely eliminate the destabilizing components of navies and their armaments.

It goes without saying that these actions should take place under reliable control.

The above-mentioned ideas do not represent some kind of clear-cut schedule of actions, but rather they reflect a general vision of possible variants for developing dialogue in the naval area.

The implementation of measures for controlling naval arms will ultimately be tied to the general improvement of the international situation with the growth of mutual trust and progress in other areas of arms control.

The main thing to do now is to initiate dialogue and begin to prepare for future negotiations, in the course of which it may be possible to find a balance of interests and work out mutually accepted measures for strengthening stability at sea.

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